

LITTLE KARI

By Emilie Poulsen





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LITTLE
KARI

BY EMILIE POULSSON

CHILD STORIES AND RHYMES

FOUR COUSINS

THE FRIENDLY PLAYMATE AND OTHER STORIES
FROM NORWAY

INGER JOHANNE'S LIVELY DOINGS

THROUGH THE FARMYARD GATE

WHAT HAPPENED TO INGER JOHANNE



LITTLE KARI

from the Norwegian of
INGRID KITTELSEN TREIDER

translated by
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illustrated by
NINON MAC KNIGHT

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IN heartfelt gratitude
this book is dedicated to my friend,
Miss Sölvi Greve.

It is through her eyes (since my own would not serve)
that I have read the original text; and the pleasure I
always take in translating has been much increased by her
generous co-operation.

Tusind tak, kjaere veninde.

E. P.

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To Ginn and Company, Boston, Massachusetts, for the use of "The One-legged Wagtail," "April," and "Spring-Time" to which stories they hold exclusive textbook rights.

To *Picture Story Paper*, Cincinnati, Ohio, for the stories "Little Kari," "The Baby Calf," "Good Old Blakken," "Old Anna and the Nisse," and "Grandmother's Stories."

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LITTLE
KARI

I

LITTLE KARI

FAR, far away in the country on a small lonely farm lived a little girl named Kari. The other persons living there were her father and mother, her kind grandmother, and old Anna who could tell so many strange stories. Kari had no brothers or sisters and as no little children lived anywhere near her, she had no playmates.

But you must not think that Kari was lonely for all that. No, indeed. She had a host of good friends. First there was Blakken, the horse, then all the cows, the sheep, and the goats, and the hens and the ducks. Besides, there were the many birds that came to eat from the bird tray outside of Mother's window, the flowers and butterflies that were so gay in the summer. Kari was even acquainted with the bumblebees which she liked to watch.

Since she had so many friends you can well understand that there was plenty to do and that the days never seemed long to little Kari.

Early one morning when the birds tapped on her window as usual, calling "Peep, peep! Titt, titt!" Kari knew that they meant "Up, up! Time to get up, little Kari." She was already wide awake, so out of bed she sprang at once and it did not take her long to dress herself, you may

be sure. Carrying her shoes she tiptoed softly along, so as not to awaken father and mother, and went into the kitchen to old Anna.

It was six o'clock. Only the little birds, the cock and the hens, and old Anna and little Kari were up so early in the morning.

How cozy and warm it was in the kitchen and how good was the smell of the coffee!

"Are you here already, child?" said old Anna as she waddled to the



cupboard and took out a cup. Then Kari sat beside her on the kitchen bench and the two had their coffee together.

"This is so that we shall be really wide awake," said Anna. She called Kari's coffee a "sugar drop"—it was so weak and sweet—and her own strong coffee was a "comfort drop." Kari had also a big slice of bread

with syrup on it. When they had eaten, old Anna closed her eyes, bowed her head, and said, "Praise and thanks for food."

Then Anna took a pail and mixed in it a drink for the cows, Kari helping as she always did. She took a handful of salt, threw it into the pail, stirring vigorously, and tasted the drink to make sure that it was good.

Then with old Anna carrying the pail with the drink in it, and Kari carrying the empty milk pails, they strolled out to the barn.

"The morning hour has gold in its mouth," said old Anna.

Little Kari knew that this was true, for one morning when she peeped out of her window when the sun had just risen, she had seen with her own eyes that the sky was like gold.

When old Anna opened the barn door, all the cows stood up in their stalls, rattling their chains, and calling "Moo-oo!" and there came to Kari whiffs of the warm, barn odor that she liked so well.

All the cows were given their food and drink and then while old Anna milked them, Kari fed the calves. One little red calf was Kari's own. It was so fond of her that it licked her hands and it even licked her head so that her hair stood out in every direction.

Near the barn door there was a small wooden cup, and into this cup Anna always poured some of the fresh milk.

"That is for Tussen," she said. "We must always treat Tussen well." "Tussen" was Anna's name for a Nisse, a little creature like a Brownie.

"But father says there are no Nisse," said Kari.

"Tush and nonsense!" said Anna indignantly. "Don't you yourself see that the milk is drunk up every day?"

Yes, Kari had seen that often but she knew well enough the "Nisse"

that drank the milk from the wooden cup. Just now she saw Puss creeping in at the barn door. But she did not dare to say this to Anna for then Anna might not believe in Nisse any longer either; and there would be no more of her interesting Nisse stories in the evenings. That would be too bad, for old Anna knew so many queer stories about Nisse.

After they had finished in the barn, the two milkmaids went out. Old Anna, stout and broad, went first, with two milk pails hanging from a yoke over her shoulders. Little Kari followed, carrying a small pail of milk which was for grandmother. After Kari came Puss, with her tail in the air and licking drops of milk from around her mouth.

At the house everybody was now up. Over by the stable stood Ola, the farm boy, who was putting the harness on Blakken. Mother was at the kitchen door, going out to the storehouse to get some bread. Kari was quick in setting her milk pail down and skipping after her.

Taking the big heavy key of the storehouse from her mother, she sprang across the farmyard. The cock and all the hens rushed after her, for well they knew that when Kari went into the storehouse there would soon come a shower of grain for them.

Kari climbed the high stone steps. It was all she could do to get the heavy key into the keyhole, even though she stood on the tips of her toes. Her little hands could not turn the key, but Mother had now come.

While Mother was getting the meat and Pie flat bread, Kari took grain from the big barrel, put it into her apron, and went out on the steps, calling, "Here chick, chick, chick."

All the hens and the big cock rushed toward her again. They pecked

and pecked, eating the grain that Kari threw out to them. But you should have seen Father Cock! He would take a grain in his bill, drop it, cluck, and make a great fuss and then would do the same thing again. He never stopped until a hen came and ate up the grain he had dropped so he never got any food for himself.

Kari thought the hens might have helped themselves when the grain lay so thick upon the ground. If that little speckled hen did not stand there and eat only the grain he put out for her! Kari could get quite provoked when she saw such doings.

But now Anna was calling Kari to come in and have breakfast with father and mother.



II

THE BABY CALF

GOODNESS gracious me, how stupid you are, young one!" said little Kari to a new baby calf which she was trying to teach to drink. She pushed its head down into the pail of milk but the calf only blew the milk out through its nose and staggered backwards on its long sprawling legs.

"Ugh! now I have surely fussed over you for a whole hour and yet you do not understand anything." Kari straightened up. "It is not to be expected though that you should have much sense, for you have only just come into the world. But can't you understand that Kari is going to teach you to drink?"

She took hold of the calf again and, kneeling beside it, pushed its head into the pail. Her other hand she put into the milk and then into the calf's mouth.

Now the calf began to suck her hand, and drink the milk from Kari's fingers. Again and again Kari dipped her fingers into the milk and put them in the calf's mouth.

When the calf had taken all the milk and Kari stood up, she found herself very stiff from staying so long in that uncomfortable position.

"You are clever after all," she said as she patted and stroked the calf. "Poor thing, you were so hungry and had never drunk milk before in your whole life. But now I shall take good care of you so that you shall grow and get big. When the weather is warm and the grass is green, you shall go out of doors with Kari to the meadow pasture and see the whole world.

"Oh, you don't know how big the world is! It is very different from the little barn you live in. But you need not be afraid, for I shall be with you to take care of you, you dear little thing. Perhaps you will have a bell when you get big, and go with the cows to the mountain pasture.

"Are your little legs tired now? Yes, you had better lie down. I'll make a soft place for you."

Kari went into the barn and got a lap full of soft hay which she put under the calf. Then she took a handful of hay and rubbed the calf with it for that made its skin nice and warm.

"Well, I must stop this minute. I have not done a thing yet but take care of you. That would not matter if I had nothing else to do, but Kari is busy, you must understand. You, who are so little, shall

now be quiet and lie there and sleep and dream about all the wonderful things Kari has told you of."

Old Anna came to the barn door carrying the milk pails. It was time to milk the cows.

"Well," said Kari, "the calf is asleep now, but he drank up all his milk first. I had a hard time to get him to learn how to drink the milk, but he knows now."

"How clever you are, Kari, to have taught the calf to drink! I think you could take charge of all the cows right now."

"Oh, no," said little Kari, brushing the hay from her dress. "But you are beginning to get a little old, Anna, so that you need some help now and then. It would not be much trouble for me to attend to such small matters as the new calves. I shall love to do it, for they are such darlings."

"That is kind of you, little Kari," old Anna smiled. "It will be a big help to me to have you do it."

III

GOOD OLD BLAKKEN

*“Fola, fola, Blakken,
Rest and sleep the night away,
You have worked enough today,
Fola, fola Blakken,”*

sang little Kari as she patted Blakken while Ola, the farm boy, took off the harness.

“Oh, that is easy to say,” said Ola, “but there is more land we must plough before night.”

“I believe you work Blakken too hard, Ola boy.” Kari stroked Blakken’s side. “See, he is all wet.”

“It is warm today, you know.” Ola shoved his cap back on his head and wiped his face with his shirt sleeve.

“Poor horse,” said Kari, laying her cheek against Blakken’s. “I think your eyes look very unhappy.” She turned around, “You are really kind to old Blakken, are you, Ola?”

Ola took the harness on his arm and went to the harness room. “Blakken hasn’t a hard time,” he said. “Now he shall go out in the farmyard for the whole noontime.”

So Blakken went out in the shade of the storehouse and ate the sweet fine clover that grew there, and swished the flies away with his long black tail.

“Now he is enjoying himself,” said Kari.

“You must go in and have your dinner, too, little one,” said Ola, taking her small soft hand in his big rough one and leading her in to Anna.

Ola sat on the steps of the storehouse taking his noonday rest. After dinner little Kari sat beside him. Blakken was resting too; he was lying down under the big mountain ash tree in front of the storehouse.

“Blakken is well off here,” said Ola. “If you sent him away from the farm, ever so far up in the forest, now when there is such fine grass up there, a week would not go by before Blakken would stand here in the farmyard again. He would long for his home and would have to come down to see us. He would never thrive if he went away from here and had ever so kind an owner. No, he would long for little Kari, for his own stall and everything; yes, even for Ola himself would he long.”

“Don’t you think that is strange, Ola?”

“Oh, no, it is with animals as it is with us folk, I think,” replied Ola.

“Do you know what Father has told me?” Kari sat a little nearer Ola. “Father says that in a great city there are many, many horses that have never been in a green field where they could eat grass. They have no other place to stand when they eat and rest but in a dark stall. That is what Father has told me. Don’t you think it is strange that such things can be? Do you know what I think? Well, I think that there should be no horses in the city, only automobiles, that’s what I think.”

"Yes, yes. Well, Blakken and I must go to work again now." Ola got up and stretched himself.

But it seemed as if Blakken had known that he would be harnessed again, for he had disappeared behind the blacksmith shop.



"*Fola, fola,*" called the boy, going toward him.

But just as Ola would have caught him, Blakken reared and leaped away. So now began a chase around the smithy, Blakken first, Ola after, round and round, while little Kari looked on, doubled over with laughter. "You're playing hide and seek," she laughed.

Blakken would stand at the corner and peep around till Ola saw him, then would whirl about and leap to the other side.

"You'll never in the world catch him," said Kari, still laughing.

At last, she had to help. "*Fola, fola,* old Blakken, *fola, fola,*" she

coaxed. Immediately he came ambling towards her. She took hold of his mane and held it until Ola came. "Now you see!" Little Kari looked severely at Ola. "Are you sure you are kind to Blakken? He wouldn't go to you."

"Oh, Blakken isn't stupid," said Ola, putting the harness on him. "He knew that when I caught him, there would be hard work that tired him, while with you there would be only petting and play."

IV

OLD ANNA AND THE NISSE

LITTLE KARI stood in the doorway and peeped out at Anna, who was going to the barn, carrying something well hidden under her big blue apron. She thought that no one saw her, but Kari was watching. She knew that it was porridge for the Nisse that old Anna was carrying. Kari thought it would be fun to tease her about it.

As soon as Anna came out of the barn, she went into the shed. Kari quickly leaped across the farmyard and crept in at the barn door. There right by the water trough stood a wooden bowl filled with cream porridge, such as the family had just had for dinner.

Kari hopped about, too full of fun to stand still. Old Anna should get a good teasing. But there she stood in the doorway.

“What are you doing here at this time of day?” asked Anna.

Little Kari looked straight at her. “Oh, I just wanted to see whether you were giving the cat some cream porridge,” she said.

“Sit down beside me, child,” said Anna, as she sat down upon a milking stool, “and I will tell you something. We must treat the Nisse well if we would keep him. I shall tell you about him, little Kari, because you are so kind about helping me. A Nisse must be-

long to a farm if the animals there are to thrive. Every farm has had its own Nisse. If any farm is without one it is because the farm folks did not give him even the scrapings of the porridge pot. This makes him cross and he gets tired of being treated so. Then he goes to another place. Perhaps you think that the cows would have as smooth coats and thrive as well as they do, if we had no Nisse. Oh, no!" Anna shook her head vigorously.

"What good does the Nisse do?" asked Kari, moving closer to Anna.

"What good does he do? Well, he takes care of the animals in little ways to make them comfortable and happy, when no one else is in the barn. He curries the horses and brushes the cows and is not stingy about giving them an extra bunch of hay now and then. He talks with the animals, too, and makes everything cozy for them. Sometimes when I come into the barn in the morning, the cows look as if they have been newly brushed, and are so smooth that I could not have done it better myself. That is sure proof. So, why should we not be glad to give him a little porridge?"

"Have you ever seen the Nisse, Anna?" little Kari asked.

"Yes, I have seen him several times. The first time was when I was in the shed to get an armful of hay for the home cow. The other cows were up at the mountain pasture. I felt something warm and furry in the hay and saw two eyes looking at me. I was so frightened that I threw down the hay and ran out."

Old Anna trembled even now at the thought of that time.

"Don't you think it was the cat?" asked Kari.

"The cat!" exclaimed Anna in disgust. "No, indeed! I know how a cat looks. The second time was that autumn when Litago was sick.

We had to send for the cow doctor. You do not remember that, for you were too little. I could not rest that night. So I put on my dress and went to the barn to see the cow. I was in my stocking feet, and went carefully through the door so as not to disturb her. Then I felt sure I saw the Nisse. He sat on the edge of Litago's manger, stroked



and patted her and talked baby talk to her in a queer, small piping voice. When he saw me he came down from the manger in a hurry and was gone."

"How did he look, Anna?" asked little Kari. "Do tell me how he looked."

"Oh, he was little, dressed in gray and had a little red cap on his head. It is not easy for me to describe him, but those who have seen

him say that his eyes are like a cat's and that he is covered with fur. They say he has no thumbs. Litago would not have gotten well so quickly if the Nisse had not been there.

"I do not believe a bit in that silly cow doctor. All these new notions won't do for animals. They like the old ways better, you know. Well, my child, the day the Nisse leaves the farm, that day will old Anna go, too. That is what I say."

"I shall help you all I can and be good to the Nisse, too," said Kari. "But you must promise me not to say anything about it to anyone."

"You know I will not say anything, child," replied old Anna, shaking her head vigorously. "I only told you about the Nisse because you are always kind to little creatures. Now you may help me to take care of our Nisse."

Then old Anna and Kari strolled hand in hand from the barn.

V

APRIL

OUT in the sunshine, Kari was playing hop-sotch. She pushed her winter cap back from her forehead and unbuttoned her coat. Whew! how warm it was! She must go in and ask once more.

“Mother, mayn’t I go without my coat now? You have no idea how frightfully warm it is!”

“I have never heard anything like your teasing,” said Mother. Father looked up from his newspaper.

“Yes, indeed, run along, my girl. You may go without any clothes at all if you wish, only as sure as you get sick, you shall be punished.”

Kari rushed out to Anna in the kitchen and threw off her coat. “I have permission to go without it,” she said triumphantly.

“Well, I never—” said Anna, but Kari heard no more for she was already out of doors.

It was good that it was Father who decided things mostly. After him, old Anna. At any rate this was what Kari thought just now.

“Those who are oldest have most sense,” Anna always said.

Kari understood from this that Anna meant that she, little Kari,

had the least sense of all. But no, Puss was younger than she—that was certainly true.

“Come now, little Puss,” said Kari, as she took the cat under her arm. “We’ll go down to the brook and play. Do you see that I am going without my coat? It will soon be summer; but you are so young and so stupid that you don’t understand that,” she said as she hugged the cat close to her.

When they came to the brook, the cat began to me-ow and scratch so fiercely that Kari had to put her down; and quick as a flash she sprang over the ground towards home. She was frightened when she heard the gurgling of the brook. She had not forgotten how Kari had bathed her under the waterspout the other day.

“Oh, well, home with you then, ’fraid cat,” called Kari after her. Kari bent down a big branch of pussy willows which she broke off and put into her hat.

With stones and moss, Kari now built a little dam across the brook so as to make a pool. Into this she threw the pussy willows, one after another. They swam about almost as if they were alive. Kari stood with a long stick in her hand and separated them when they floated together in a clump.

But splash! She had slid down the sloping bank and now stood with both feet in the brook. Ugh! but the water was cold!

It did not take Kari long to get out again. The water gushed out of her shoes as she walked, she was so wet.

But she forgot this immediately for all at once, it began to snow! No, it was hail! Oh, what fun! Great big hailstones! Kari tried to catch some in her hand, but they bounced out again instantly. They

came so thick and fast that she could not see the buildings at home any more.

She now thought she would play that she was one of the three princesses who were taken away by the snow fairies, but soon she could think of nothing but the snow which had begun to fall.



She shut her eyes and sprang about, struck out with her arms, and seemed to try to fight the storm. The snow clung to her hair and even to her eyelashes, and she could see nothing now, however hard she tried. What should she do?

Just then, she heard old Anna calling, "Kari, little Kari, you are to come at once."

In at the kitchen door came a small, wet, tousled Kari, whose shoes left pools of water wherever she stepped. She was so cold that her teeth chattered.

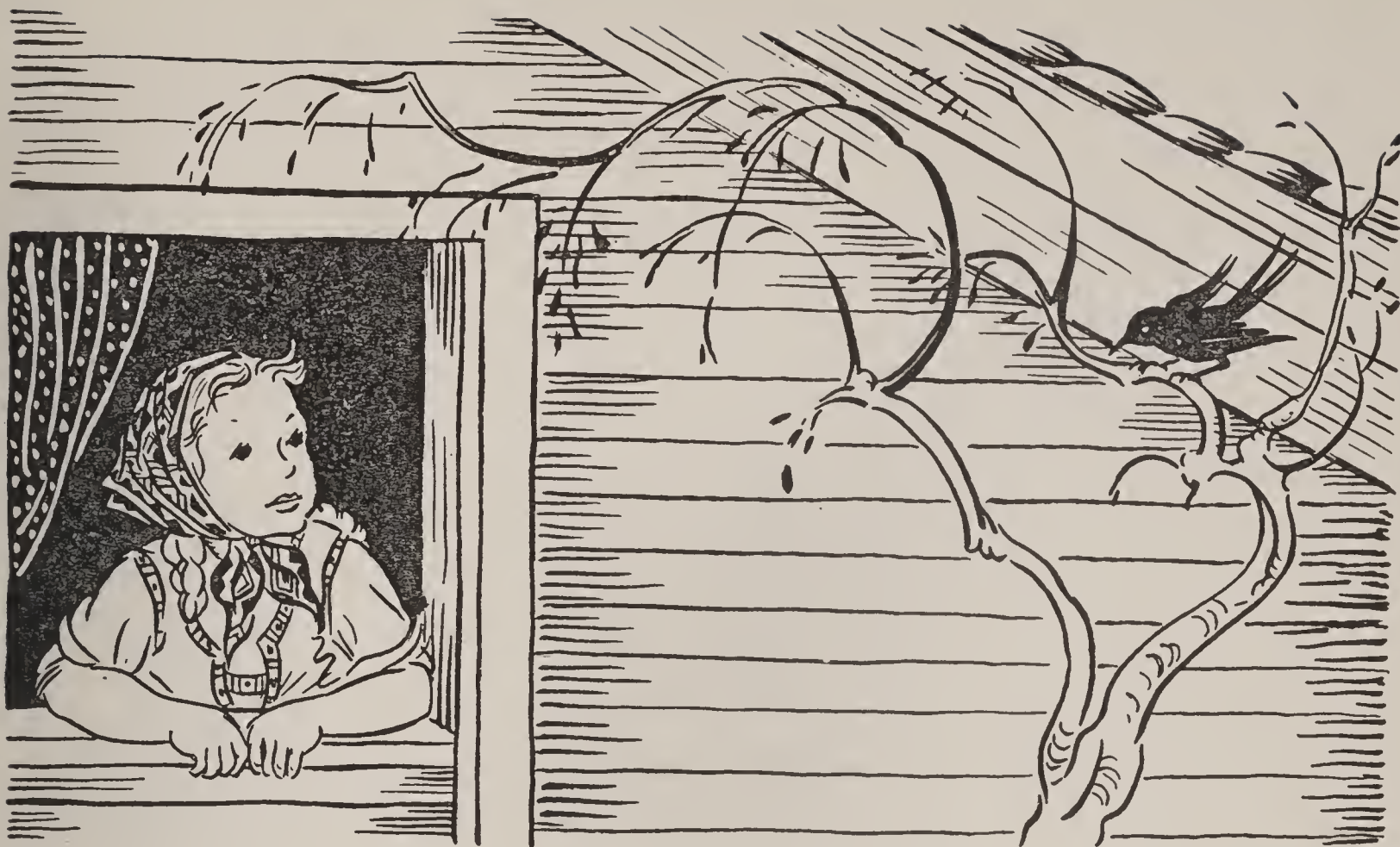
“That’s what you get for going without your coat,” said Anna. “I knew that we were going to get snow. You should have listened to me.” She took a big birch log and laid it on the fire. “Come here, child, and I will undress you,” she said.

So all the wet clothes were taken off, and Kari was wrapped in a woolen blanket; then she had some warm milk and bread.

Anna seated herself close by the fire, with Kari on her lap.

“Oh, I feel so warm and comfortable now,” said Kari. “You are so kind, Anna. Won’t you sing a little for me now?”

So Anna sang to her, and soon Kari was sound asleep.



VI

SPRING-TIME

IT was but a few weeks ago that Kari had rejoiced over the first grassy spot free from snow on the sunny side of the house. Now she was rejoicing that only small blue-white spots of snow showed here and there on the brown fields.

Oh, no time was like the Spring! Everything in nature was so busy then, something new happening every day. First came a father starling, apparently to see whether the old nest was in order. Up in the birdhouse he rummaged about and threw out old sticks and other trash and carried in new nest materials. My, oh my, how much he

had to do! Late in the afternoon he rested a little, sitting out on the stick that projected from the birdhouse or on the ridge of the farmhouse roof or on the top of the chimney, and sang with joy because Spring had come.

Kari brought her Grandmother out on the stone steps to see the first starling as he sat there in the sun. Grandmother shaded her eyes with her hand and looked about.

"But Grandmother dear, you are crying! Don't you think it is delightful to see the starling again?"

"Yes, indeed, my darling Kari," answered Grandmother. "It is because I am so glad that I must cry a little."

Anything so queer as that Kari had never heard. No, she would surely not cry when she was glad, for if she did, then she would have to cry all the time—and crying was so sad.

Soon more father starlings came and in a few days all the mother birds. They peeped inquisitively into the old nests to see how nicely the father starlings had put them in order for them. And in the afternoon all the birds sat outside the birdhouse and sang together joyously.

The air seemed full of bird twitterings and above all could be heard the chaffinch's jolly chatter. Kari was as happy as the birds.

Scarcely had she told that the starlings had come, before she ran into the house again to say that she had seen the first wagtail, too.

"He went tripping through the stable yard, shaking his tail and flying over the mud puddles so as not to get his legs wet."

"How did you see him first?" asked old Anna.

"I saw him from the side," answered Kari.

“That was good, child,” said Anna. “That means good luck. If you had seen him directly in front, you could expect something unlucky.”

How wonderful Anna was! She surely knew everything. Kari would see to it that Mother, Father, and Grandmother, and old Anna saw the wagtail from the side. She would watch him and when he was turned sideways, she would call to them to hurry out to see him.

Oh, how many things little Kari had to do in the Spring! She dug ditches in the farm yard and the water ran in them till it looked almost like small brooks in some places.

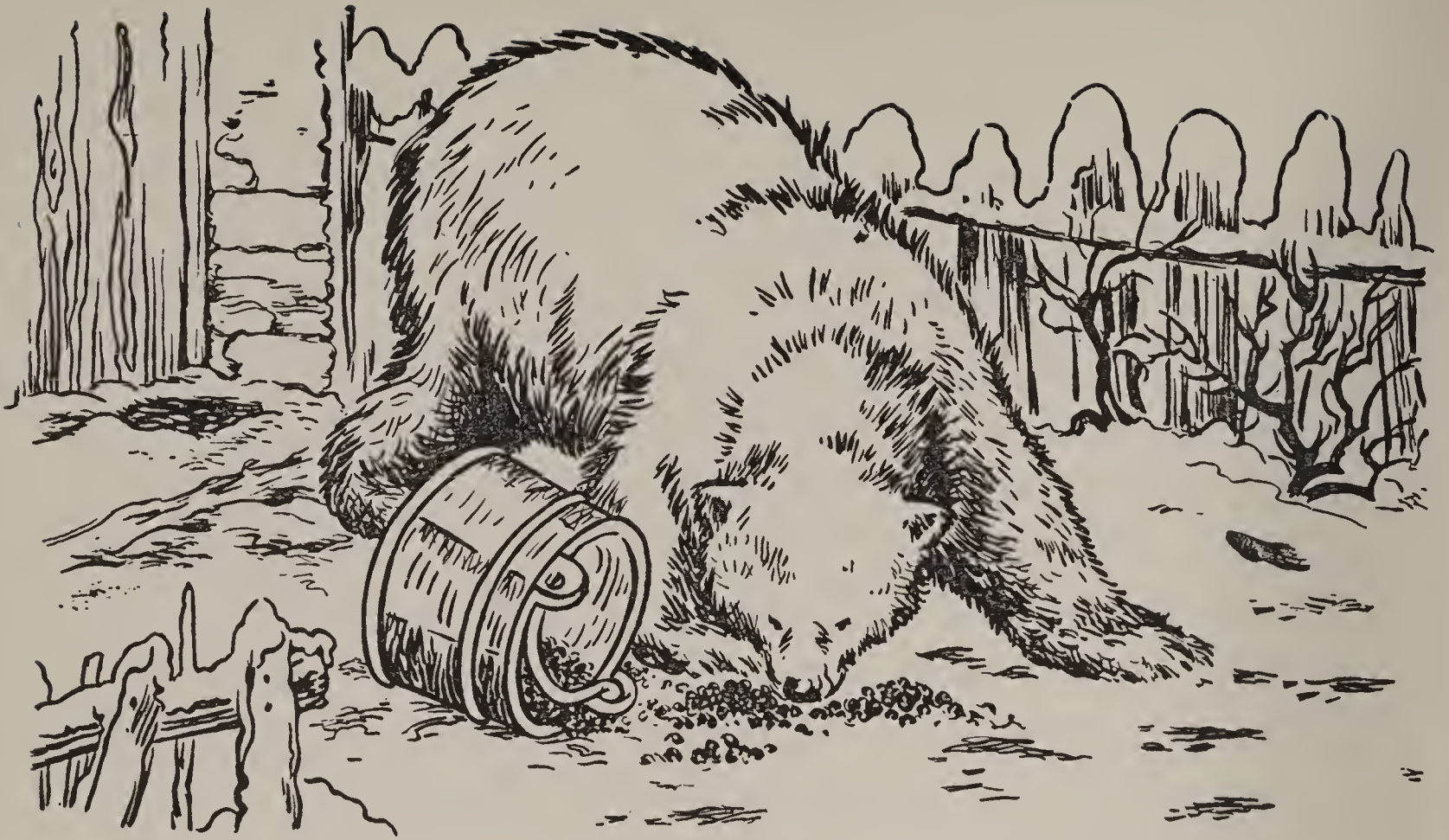
She shoveled snow and carried pieces of ice that lay in the shade out into the sunshine so that they should melt more quickly. She wanted to help Spring along.

“Oh, oh!” There by the roadside ditch small yellow flowers were shining out. Little Kari threw down the spade and hurried to pluck the blossoms and take them in to Grandmother.

One day Kari went with her Mother to pluck the blue anemones. They walked beside the brook that was near the farm. The brook was dashing along over the stones, gurgling and behaving like a big stream. Here was where the pussy willows grew—they were now big and plump.

Mother and Kari climbed over the fence and there under the small birches, through all the brown dry leaves lying there from last year, peeped the first little blue anemone.

“Oh, Mother,” shouted little Kari. She was so happy she could hardly contain herself. “Have you ever seen anything so blue?” She held the little flower up in the air for an instant. “Oh, oh, Mother, come here! Here is one that is even bluer!”



VII

GRANDMOTHER'S STORIES

LITTLE KARI flattened her nose against the window pane down which the water was running and gazed after Father and Mother as they drove away with Blakken to the minister's.

"Kari is to stay indoors today," Mother said, "and she must knit six times around on her new stocking."

To sit still and knit was the worst thing Kari knew.

"I always have to knit when you go away!" she complained.

"Yes, I can truly see that," laughed Mother. "You have knit such a long piece of the stocking."

"Well, you never go away," grumbled Kari.

Blakken and Mother and Father were now beyond the turn of the road and out of sight. There on the window sill lay the knitting with its stiff shining needles. And Mother had put a piece of red worsted in the stocking as a mark, so that she could see just how many rows Kari knit!

Six times around and there were four needles to knit stitches from, each of the six times around! Little Kari thought that scarcely anyone could count that number. It would be too many.

She took the stocking and went to the kitchen. But Anna was scrubbing the floor and Kari was not at all welcome.

"I won't have anyone tracking up my clean floor," said Anna. So little Kari had to go away.

"Grown people are so stupid," she thought. "I would never have scrubbed the kitchen floor today when there is so much mud outdoors because the floor would soon look as if it had not been scrubbed, but I suppose it is Anna's regular day for doing it."

Grandmother was sitting in her own room by the fire in a big wing chair, reading the newspaper. The door opened quietly and in came Kari.

"Well, well!" said grandmother. "Is this a strange woman out with her knitting in this bad weather? That is really very pleasant. I must get out my knitting, too! How cozy it will be, both knitting!"

Little Kari was allowed to put a handful of dried rose leaves on the stove to make the room fragrant. Then she took her knitting and sat down near Grandmother.

"It was in the paper today that they had seen a bear up on one of

the mountains," said Grandmother. "When I was young, it was not seldom that these big fellows were seen."

"Have you ever seen a bear, Grandmother?" asked Kari.

"Not a living one," answered Grandmother, "but I saw a great big one a half hour after it had been shot in a marsh near our house."

"I am glad I was not there at that time," said Kari.

"They say that a bear has ten men's strength and twelve men's sense," said Grandmother, "and does not harm small, innocent children. Your grandfather told about a little girl up in Eggedal who met a bear when she was out to look for the cow at milking time. She was terrified when she saw the big bear coming toward her. Then she remembered that her mother had said that if she ever met a bear she should just speak prettily to him. So the little girl folded her hands, curtsied low, and said as nicely and politely as she could, 'Are you there, my golden dolly?' At this, the bear grumbled softly and went right back into the forest again.

"Oh, yes," Grandmother added, "there are many strange stories about Bamsa Bear."

"Do tell me another," said Kari, "for I knit so much faster while I listen."

"Well," continued Grandmother, "you know old Guri Ligaren? Her parents were said to be very stingy. They never gave anything away and were always looking out for themselves. Naturally they were not much liked by their neighbors. Well, a little way from their farm, there was a multerberry marsh. This they watched over so well that other people could not get so much as a single berry. One year when there were a great many multerberries, Guri's father went to the marsh



NINON MACKNIGHT

every day to pick the berries as soon as they were ripe. But there was someone else who went to the marsh to wait for the berries to ripen, and that was Bamsa Bear. His great footprints were everywhere.

“Guri’s father did not wish Bamsa Bear to have any of the berries, so he and his wife went to the swamp and picked all the berries, ripe and unripe. That night they went to bed, well pleased with their harvest of multerberries. The ripe ones they had put carefully into sugar and the unripe were put into bed-straw to ripen.

“Very late that night, three loud blows sounded on the house door. The man went to see who was there, but the night was dark and a strong wind was blowing. He could see nothing.

“‘It must be that there is a board loose in the house wall,’ said he, and went to bed.

“But scarcely had he lain down than the knocks came again, louder than before. Then they were both afraid and the woman sobbed and made a great fuss. There was not much more sleep for them that night.

“The next morning they soon found out who it was that had knocked on their door. There were bear’s tracks all about the house. Bamsa Bear was angry because they had taken all the berries and left none for him.

“Both the man and his wife were now afraid that the bear might take his revenge upon them. They thought their cattle would be in danger from him.

“The next evening they set out all the best multerberries in a wooden bucket on the doorstone. That night there was no banging on the door. But in the morning they saw bear tracks all around, and the bucket was empty. They had kept for themselves only the unripe berries that lay in the bed-straw but by and by these ripened very well.

“Well, the bear did a good thing that time,” said Grandmother, “both for himself and for others. The Ligaren family became less selfish after that experience with Bamsa Bear.”

Just then the door opened and there stood Anna carrying a big tray.

“Oh, Anna, Anna!” said Grandmother in surprise.

“Well, it is such horrid weather today, that I thought an extra treat of coffee and cakes would help out,” said Anna.

“Oh, oh!” shouted Kari, who had just counted the rows on her stocking above the red thread, “I have knit two needles more than mother said I should!”

VIII

THE ONE-LEGGED WAGTAIL

GRANDMOTHER and Kari sat out on the veranda with Kari's primer. Kari read the little verse about a grandmother.

“My Grandma is so good and kind,
One like her you will never find.
But how is yours?
You've none? How sad!
Indeed, that must be very sad.”

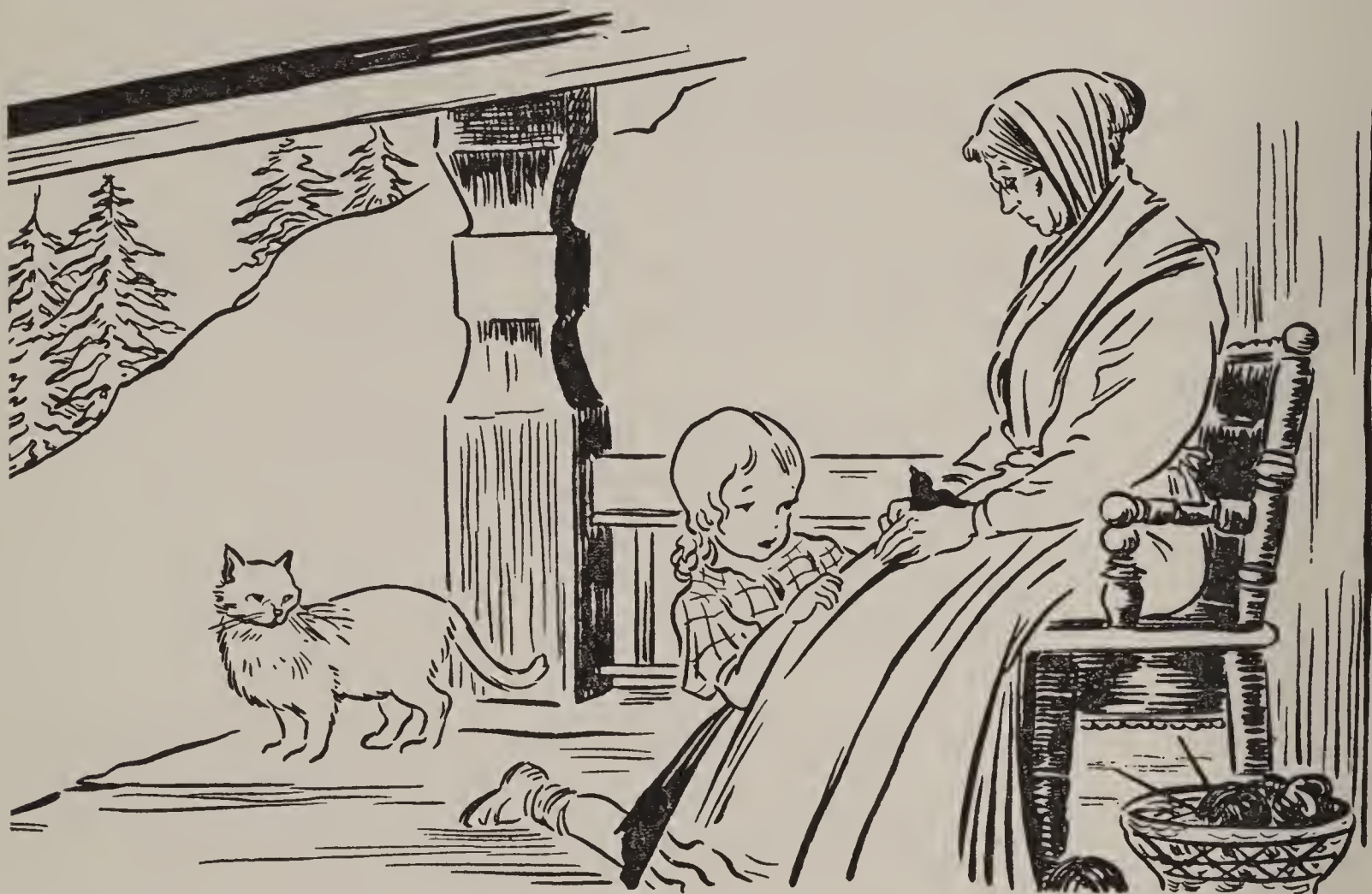
Just then the kitten came and lying down in the grass beside the veranda, began to play with something it had in its paws. It rolled itself around, threw something high in the air and then caught it in its paws again.

“Oh, Grandmother! Puss has caught a little young bird!” shrieked Kari, throwing down her primer. An instant after, she was standing there with the young bird in her hand.

“Fie, for shame, Puss! What have you done?” said Kari. She struck at the cat which, however, sprang to one side, arching its back and carrying its tail high in air.

"Poor little bird!" said Kari, stroking and patting the small tousled creature.

"Bring him here," said Grandmother. "And I will see whether the cat has hurt him much." She laid aside her knitting and Kari put the bird in her lap.



"Oh, the poor thing!" said Grandmother. "The cat has broken one of his legs entirely off! It is best that the bird should die."

There lay the little Wagtail baby, looking at Kari and Grandmother with his frightened, bead-like eyes.

"Oh, no, no!" said Kari. "He must not die. I will make a nice nest for him, give him food and take the best of care of him."

So the baby Wagtail came to live in Kari's room and surely no birdling adopted by a little girl ever had better care.

In a sunny window among the flowers stood a bowl in which Mother usually kept her ball of wool when she was knitting. In this bowl, little Kari made a soft nest for the birdling. She caught flies on the window panes and gave them to him, and he ate them and grew strong, even if he did have only one leg.

One day when Kari went into her room, she got quite a fright. The bird was not in his nest! Kari looked for him high and low without finding him. Then she thought of the cat and that made her very anxious. However, she kept on looking about the room.

Well! There sat the little bird in the window behind the big flower pot, catching flies for himself!

"Oh, oh! Are you there, my little Wagtail? I am so glad!" said little Kari as she went to take him.

But vips! He flew around the room and perched on Grandfather's picture over the bureau. "Pip, pip, pip!" he said.

"Oh, my dear birdie! Can you really fly?" exclaimed Kari joyously. Then she ran to tell Grandmother.

"He can fly, can he?" said Grandmother. "Then you must let him out or he will fly against the window pane and kill himself."

Kari knew that Grandmother was right. So, Father, Mother, Grandmother, old Anna, and Ola—all of them—must come to see little Kari let the young Wagtail out.

"I could feel his heart beating with joy!" said Kari. "Now he will meet all the other Wagtails. Are you looking?" All looked while Kari opened her little hand carefully.

Vips! Away flew the little bird and perched on the high ridge of the storehouse roof.

“Skvett, skvett!” called the bird, wagging his tail.

“Did you see how high he flew?” shouted Kari, with great pride.

“Hear how he talks grown-up talk, too, not just ‘pip, pip, pip!’ But now I shall never see him any more,” added Kari sorrowfully.

But Kari did see the Wagtail later in the summer. Once her pet and two other Wagtails were in the field eating worms. But when Kari went there her bird acted as if he didn’t know her and flew away. At another time he came and sat on her window sill.

“He remembers all the flies that used to be on the window,” thought Kari.

When autumn came, Kari’s bird flew away with all the other Wagtails.

“Now they are going to a warm land,” said Grandmother. Then she told Kari how it was in the South, in Egypt, along the broad river Nile; what strange flowers, birds and animals lived there, and that many birds from northern lands like Norway, flew there to stay until Spring.

“Oh, Grandmother!” said Kari. “Just think! If I could only fly, I’d fly to the South and see everything and then fly quickly home again.”

“You’ll have to practice flying, then,” said Grandmother, smiling. “You might think of something very light, and then perhaps you could manage it.”

Just after this talk, Kari went alone to the hill for there, no one at

home could see what she was doing. She flapped her arms and tried to think herself as light as a bird; she thought of feathers and leaves and how they floated in the air, but nothing came of her trying to fly but some little jumps and hops. She could not fly at all. But she had many strange thoughts as she walked slowly back down the hill.

Winter went and Spring came. One day Ola and Blakken had been plowing in the upper field. When he was taking Blakken's harness off, Ola called to Kari.

"Kari, I have a greeting for you from an old acquaintance of yours. Can you guess who it is?"

Kari began to guess. "Was it perhaps the priest?"

"He went after me in the furrow and ate worms," said Ola.

No, then it couldn't have been the priest.

"It was that one-legged Wagtail of yours," said Ola.

"A Wagtail? My own little Wagtail!" shouted Kari, joyfully.

After dinner and a little rest, she put on Father's big shoes and went with Ola to the upper field. They had not been there long before the Wagtail came. "Skvett, skvett!" he said, as he hopped close behind the plough on his one leg and ate worms from the furrow.

"I think he meant that for thanks, Ola," said Kari.

"Oh, yes, you may believe that if you wish to," answered Ola, lighting his pipe.

"Ugh!" Kari felt provoked. Ola was so stupid, so stupid!

As soon as Ola had finished his ploughing, the Wagtail disappeared.

"What do you think has become of him?" asked Kari.

"I think he has gone to the lower field," said Ola. "He has a mate and young ones there. He told me something like that when he was following the plough to get the worms."

Kari tossed her head indignantly. "You have no right to tease me, Ola."

And now it was St. Hans' time. Kari had for some days been going to look at some strawberries that had begun to show a little red, down by the stone-wall. Now they were ripe enough for her to pick some to give to Grandmother. She strung them carefully on a straw. One, two, three, four, five beautiful ripe berries. How glad Grandmother would be! Then Kari found a few that were a little red on only one side; those she herself ate.

Daisies and bluebells were blossoming all around, so she made a pretty bouquet of these for Mother. Away over by the stone-wall stood a sweetbrier bush, full of blooming roses and buds.

Just as Kari stood there and broke off a branch, "Skvett, skvett," something said and out from the stone-wall flew her own Wagtail.

He flew anxiously about the wall, giving loud harsh calls.

Kari went carefully over to the place and peeped in among the stones. Just think! There was a little nest with four tiny naked young Wagtails in it. It was wonderfully well hidden in the wall and behind the sweetbrier bush.

Kari forgot her berries, her flowers, and everything and rushed home.

"Mother, Father! What do you think? My little Wagtail has young ones! They are in the stone-wall, near the sweetbrier bush." Then

all the household, even Grandmother, must go with Kari to the stone-wall and peep in at the little ones and the nest, while Kari hopped about in great joy and said, "The Wagtail has me to thank for everything because if there had been no little Kari there wouldn't have been any of this—not even the Wagtail himself."

IX

TOPKNOT'S SURPRISE

THE little hen, Topknot, had been acting strangely of late. She stayed by herself, and clucked and clucked although she had never had any chickens. Suddenly she disappeared altogether for quite a long time.

"She wishes to set," said Mother, "so that she can hatch out some chickens."

"Oh, yes! Oh, yes! Let's have some chickens," said Kari, hopping up and down in joy and excitement.

So Kari's father took an empty box and out of it made a nice little house with a door in the front. He painted the house red and set it out in the farmyard on four big stones.

Kari could scarcely contain herself for joy. There stood the red box with a door, and even a doorstep outside and looked like a real house. Bluebells and daisies grew close to its walls.

Mother laid some turf in the box and upon this she put a nice nest of dry hay. In this she put five big, greenish ducks' eggs, for she wished Topknot to hatch out ducklings.

Kari brought the hen and put her into the house. Topknot looked about in astonishment, went over to the nest, put her legs carefully down into it, craned her neck and blinked.

"She thinks the eggs are big and queer," said Kari, who was sitting beside the coop, watching.

Suddenly the hen began to cluck and to rearrange the hay in the nest with her bill.

"She doesn't think we have done it well enough," whispered Kari.

Then Topknot spread out all her feathers, making herself big and broad and settled herself carefully down on the eggs. A couple of them were not lying to suit her, however, so she moved them. At last she sat comfortably and blinked again as she looked at Kari.

"Topknot is glad that she has such a pretty house and nest," said Kari. "Now she can be cozy there and look at all the flowers outside her door. See how that big bluebell peeps in at her."

"The hen must not be disturbed," said Mother. "She must have peace and quiet for four weeks and then the small ducklings will come out of the eggs."

"Can't she hatch them more quickly?" asked Kari. Four weeks seemed such a frightfully long time.

Well, one day came and another day went and every day the hen came off her nest to eat and drink.

In the pan of water Kari put a rusty nail for that was good for a hen that was setting, old Anna had said. Topknot drank the water, lifting her head high each time and blinking. It was easy to see that she thought the water was good. Then she spread out her wings, stretched

her stiff legs a little, clucked, went back into the house and sat again upon the nest.

But one day Kari ran breathlessly in to Father and Mother.

“Oh, oh! the hen is out eating and there are only two eggs in the nest.”

Father and Mother couldn't understand what had become of the other three eggs. They made many guesses but old Anna mumbled something about rats.

The next day when the hen was off the nest getting her food, Kari went into the house, sobbing in great distress. There was but one egg in the nest.

Then Father knew that old Anna had been right when she said that rats had taken the eggs. He had often heard that rats would take eggs from under a setting hen but he had not believed that they could manage to take ducks' eggs as they were so big.

He made ready a rat-trap, put a piece of meat in it and set it under the little house.

The next morning Father was the first one up, eager to look at the trap. Yes! A great big rat was in it!

“Can you understand how a rat could manage to take the eggs, Anna?” asked Kari.

“Oh, he hasn't been alone in this,” answered Anna. “There have been two of them. The one would lie on his back and hold the egg in his paws, and the other would drag him out by the tail. That's the way they do.”

Surely old Anna knew everything.

“But Father caught only one rat in the trap. We must catch the other one,” said Kari.

“Oh, no!” answered Anna. “The other has been so frightened that he will keep away now.”

Not long after this, Kari rushed into the house, so excited she could scarcely get the words out. “He’s come! He’s come!”

“Who has come?” asked Mother.

“The duckling! The duckling!”



Father and Mother and old Anna must all go with her to the little house.

“Did you see the duckling?” asked Father.

“No, I did not see it, but I went down to the hen, you know, Father.” Kari was skipping along in front of him. “And I saw Topknot rise up and throw pieces of eggshell out of the nest with her bill; and then I heard the duckling say, ‘peep, peep.’ ”

There sat the hen. She moved her head from side to side as she looked at them all. Then she began to stir and lift her wings and out from

under her feathers stuck a little broad yellow bill and then came the whole head with two coal black eyes. Topknot half raised herself, pushed the young one under her feathers again, and clucked.

“Did you see it? Isn’t it pretty? Did you see how proud Topknot is? I wonder whether she knows it is a little duck.”

Kari was wild with joy.

The next day Topknot walked out and about in the farmyard with the duckling which looked like a little yellow ball, and Kari followed a little way behind to watch them. It might happen that the other hens would peck at them because they would think it a queer chicken.

When Topknot found anything to eat, she would cluck and the duckling would come running to her. They understood each other very well, those two.

But one day Mother Hen got a great shock. It had rained through the night and in a hollow place in the farmyard, the water had settled and made a large pool.

Topknot went to it to drink and clucked to the duckling, which hurried to her obediently. But instead of drinking, as the hen wished it to do, the duckling went right into the water and began to swim.

Topknot squawked with fright and went flapping around the pool. But all her clucking and coaxing was of no use. The duckling kept on swimming proudly.

After this had happened a couple of times, Topknot began to understand that the duckling was in no danger. While it swam about, she would lie down by the side of the pool and bathe herself in the dry dust.

“But I’m sure she is proud that her little duck can bathe properly in water,” said Kari.



X

KARI THINKS OF RUNNING AWAY

UP in the grove was a little girl crying. She was very sad, so sad indeed that she thought she should never be happy again. Father had scolded her, Anna looked very cross and Mother had punished her—yes, punished her although Kari had assured her that she was now going to be good anyway and that punishment was therefore unnecessary.

“No, nobody loves me,” she sobbed. Could she help it that Puss had fallen right into the biggest milkpan in the pantry? Hadn’t she caught

hold of Puss's tail and pulled her out as quickly as possible? Well, of course she had let the cat into the pantry but that was so that Puss could catch a big wasp that was buzzing around the window there. She didn't mean that the naughty cat should get into the milkpan and was more angry than she could say that Puss had done that.

And now she was sitting here looking down upon her home for the last time. She would never go there again. She would run away through the big forest to a strange city on the other side of the mountain.

Perhaps a big bear would come and eat her up. Then Father and Mother and Anna could have a good time when they had no little girl to bother them any longer.

Or perhaps she would go to America at once—over the great dangerous ocean in the big America boat? Then she might—she was not sure of that yet—she might come back, after many, many years, to see whether Father and Mother had been sorry for their treatment of her.

Old Anna would shade her eyes with her hand when little Kari came through the gate, and not knowing her, Anna would tramp into the house to say that a stranger was coming. Then Mother would take off her apron, smooth her hair quickly and she and Father would go out on the steps to meet the strange lady.

No one, not even the cat, would know Kari because she would have a parasol and a gold bracelet. But perhaps Father and Mother would be bent and gray from sorrow.

"No, no," Kari sobbed, she would not go to America. It might happen that there would be a strong dangerous wind on the sea and that the boat would capsize and then she could never come home again.

She lay down in the heather to cry some more. It was now warm, the sun stood high in the heavens, and a little bird sat in the rowan tree near her and chirped gaily. Kari did not wish to listen, but she had to, the chirping sounded so happy. She felt very tired. Everything grew more and more quiet. At last she didn't hear even the bird any longer.

Little Kari was asleep.

Kari sprang up and rubbed her eyes. She had surely slept a very, very long time. The sun must have gone wrong today since it had not got farther down in the sky. All those at home must be sitting and eating supper and had altogether forgotten little Kari.

She sighed and bit her lips. She knew now that she was frightfully hungry, too. No one thought about her. They hadn't even called her. No, she might as well lie here behind the juniper. She might even lie here till she died from hunger. Then in the morning when Ola came up there with Blakken to get wood, he would find her. She would lie so that he could see her from the road.

Then Kari peeped out from behind the juniper. Old Anna was going across the farmyard to the store-house. Perhaps she had made waffles for supper!

Kari crept out to climb on a high rock. Perhaps Anna would see her when she came out from the store-house. Perhaps she would even call her.

Kari wondered whether Anna had already been in the barn. Suppose she had forgotten to give the calf its drink, and very likely the hens had not had their extra handful of corn either.

No, this could not go on. How would things down there be managed if Kari was not there?

Now Anna came out from the store-house. She never once looked up towards the woods. It was probably best for Kari to call out to her.

"Anna, here I am."

"Are you there, little one? Be careful so that you don't fall down," came the answer. Oh, Anna was so kind!

Kari was all at once very happy. She crept quickly down from the big rock and brushed the moss and dust from her dress, and broke off a lot of branches from the juniper. These she would take down with her so that old Anna would not have to come after them. She used a brush of juniper twigs when she rinsed her milkpails.

Then Kari ran so fast down the path that the small stones rolled before her.

In the farmyard, Puss came to her. She had licked from herself the cream and milk and was all shiny black again.

"Poor Puss," said little Kari. "It was my fault that you fell into the milkpan but now you shall soon go with me to the barn and shall have an extra treat today."

There stood Mother in the doorway looking at Kari.

"Where have you been, my darling?"

"Up on the rocks, and I've picked juniper you see," said little Kari, laying down the branches.

"I have been thinking so much about you and felt so troubled," said Mother.

"So have I," said little Kari.

"Mother's own little girl," said Mother, putting her arms around Kari.

Oh, no! Never, never again would Kari think of running away from Father and Mother.

“Now the darling must come to get something to eat,” called old Anna pleasantly.

And truly if she hadn’t made waffles!

XI

UNDER THE CUCKOO TREE

MOTHER dear, just think, I dreamed last night that I heard the cuckoo," said Kari.

"Perhaps you heard it in your sleep," said Mother, "because early this morning it was calling 'cuckoo' from the big birch tree outside your window."

"It is too bad that I wasn't up then," said Kari, "for I might have gone down under the cuckoo tree and wished myself something wonderful."

Little Kari opened the window. Oh, how beautiful it was! The sun shone through the new leaves of the big birch tree. The apple tree was full of pink blossoms and the whole farmyard seemed covered with a soft green carpet.

The birds twittered and the swallows flew high up toward the blue sky. Two magpies sat chattering and pecking at each other in the big cherry tree by the gate.

Little Kari suddenly felt very happy. She threw her arms around her mother and squeezed her.

"Oh, Mother, I am so glad that it is I who am little Kari. There is surely no one in the whole world who is so happy."

Little Kari sat in the kitchen at the blue coffee table, eating her breakfast. Old Anna was telling her about the cuckoo.

“None of the little birds like the cuckoo. It builds no nest of its own but lays its eggs in the nests of other birds and so they must hatch them out and get food for this strange young one till it grows big. The poor foster parents tire themselves all out, for a young cuckoo takes a lot of food, I’ve heard,” said old Anna.

“Yes, but dear Anna,” said Kari, “perhaps the cuckoo couldn’t build a nest if it wished to. You know there are many men who couldn’t build a house.”

Just then Ola came in to get the axe that stood near the fireplace.

“Oh, Ola,” said Kari, “if you hear the cuckoo you must call me immediately. I want to try to get under the tree where it is singing, you know.”

Ola said nothing but took the axe and went out.

“Cuckoo, cuckoo!” something said very plainly.

“Oh, there’s the cuckoo, Anna,” shouted Kari and rushed to the door.

When she had come out to the farmyard she heard nothing; but by the woodpile down near the woodshed, Ola lay doubled up with laughter.

“For shame, Ola, that was horrid of you to fool me.” Kari was almost tearful. “I shall surely play a trick on you sometime, you are so horrid.”

“Cuckoo, cuckoo!” came clearly from the grove.

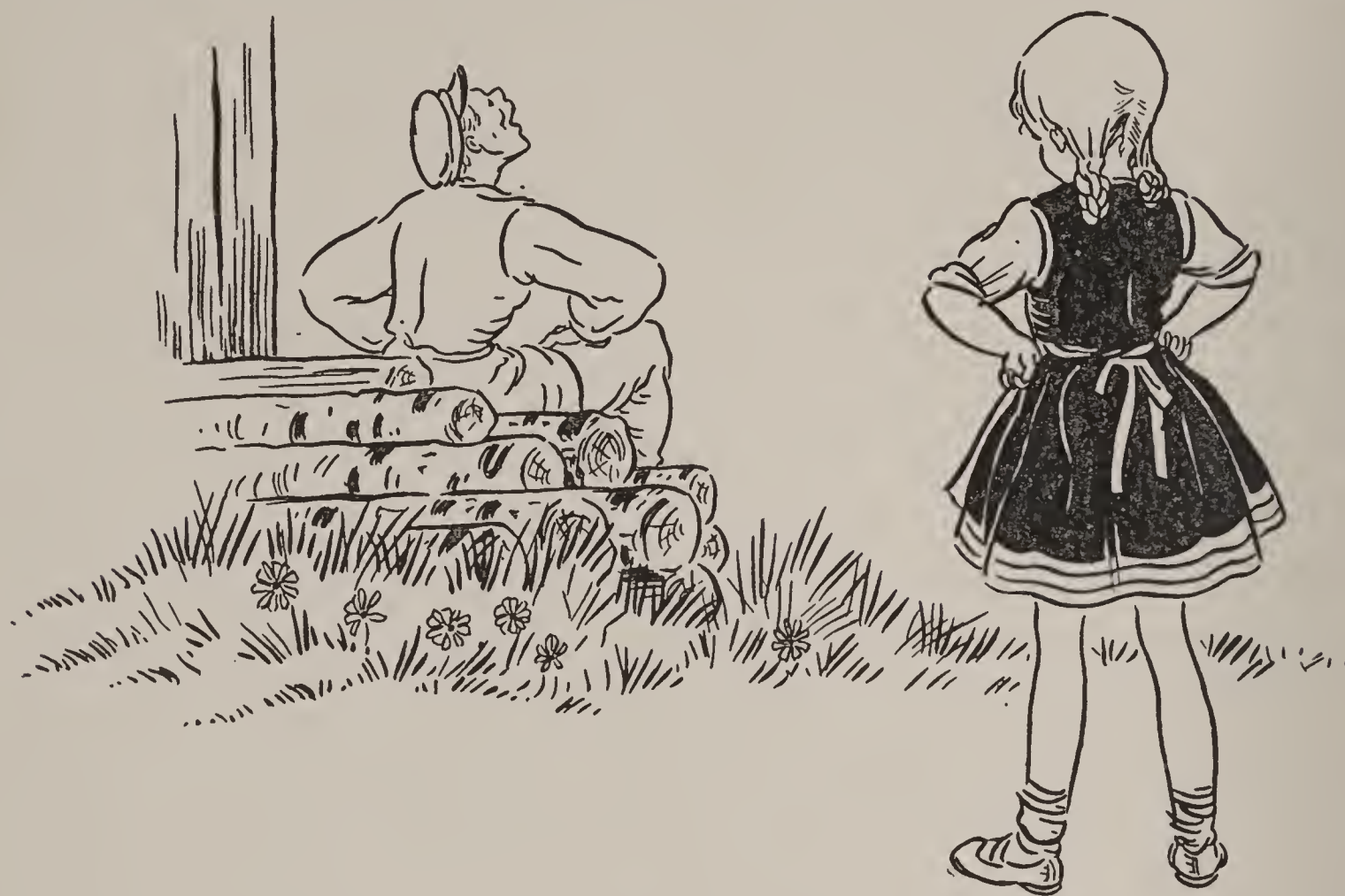
Little Kari whirled around quickly to Ola, “That’s a different cuckoo from you,” she said triumphantly. “Do you hear that?”

She sprang toward the grove.

"Cuckoo, cuckoo," she heard again. The sound came from the birch grove behind the summer barn.

Kari ran as fast as she could, crept under the fence, stood still and listened.

Yes, it was very near. There it sat in a little aspen tree. Kari went



very carefully forward. Now it was only necessary to get under the aspen tree before the cuckoo should see her. She scarcely dared to breathe, so excited was she; but before she reached the tree, the cuckoo was flying away from the farm, high over the tops of the birches. Kari followed on as fast as she could but soon grew tired and stopped under a big birch tree to get her breath. She heard nothing more from the cuckoo which must be far away now.

The tree she was under was a drooping birch tree whose leaves clung so fine and close that it was almost as if a thin, light green veil were over the tree. The sky above was so blue, oh, so blue!

“Cuckoo, cuckoo!” sounded right over Kari’s head. She was so startled that her heart beat wildly. Up there, right above her, in the big tree sat the cuckoo.

“What shall I wish for?” thought little Kari. “Oh, what do I wish for most of all?” Her thoughts whirled in her head. She couldn’t think of a thing at that instant, and away flew the cuckoo again. She was thoroughly disgusted. Did you ever know anything so provoking!

“Cuckoo, cuckoo!” sounded so far, far away in the woods that she could scarcely hear it.

She walked slowly toward home, much disappointed that she hadn’t made any wish. She might have wished that the Guri Rundingen’s big sheep would have twin lambs for if it had, Guri had promised that Kari should have one of them. How provoking that she had thought of this too late! But it was something anyway that she had really stood under the cuckoo tree.

Kari came running into the farmyard.

“Oh, I have stood under the cuckoo tree, Ola. Just think! I was right under it and stood there listening to him quite a long while.”

“What did you wish for?” asked Ola.

“Don’t you wish you knew?” said Kari with an air of mystery.



XII

A PIECE OF GOOD LUCK

GRANDMOTHER was worried and distressed because her gold-rimmed spectacles were lost. Everybody had been searching for them high and low.

“Are you perfectly sure that you haven’t played with them, Kari dear?” asked Grandmother. “I remember so distinctly that I laid them on the window sill here.”

Little Kari tried to think. "No, today I haven't touched your spectacles. It was yesterday I put them on Puss, but then I laid them back in your knitting bowl. That I remember so well, so well."

But Mother wasn't entirely sure about that. She looked worried and searched farther.

"Did anyone ever see the like?" said Father at last. "They can't have sunk into the earth."

But the glasses were gone and stayed gone.

Kari went silently out and sat on the steps. Poor Grandmother! Now she could neither read nor knit since she had no spectacles. Kari felt a lump in her throat but almost the worst was that Mother thought it was Kari who had taken them away and lost them.

Kari did not like to go to Grandmother until the new spectacles came from town. They were good but they were not gold-rimmed. Kari saw that at once.

Grandmother never said anything more about the lost spectacles.

"That is because she thinks it was my fault," thought Kari sorrowfully.

"Peter was the name of a little boy. He must have new trousers," read little Kari as she lay under the big cherry tree on the smooth green hill and read in her primer.

Today she had been with Father and Mother and given her name in at the school because in the Autumn she would begin to go there.

It was a long way to school but Father said that perhaps Ola could drive her back and forth.

“Oh, yes, that will be fun, very different from having to walk,” said Kari, kicking her legs in the air for joy.

“Hush! can you never keep still, you horrid magpies?” Two magpies were sitting up in the tree near their nest which looked merely like a little heap of sticks. They were chattering and making a great to-do as they looked down at Kari, with their knowing black eyes.

“They don’t like it very well that I am sitting under their tree,” thought Kari. Yes, for that old cherry tree might almost be said to belong to the magpies. They had had their nest there and had kept to it as long as Grandmother could remember. Father was often disgusted with the magpies. They stole eggs from the hens and would never leave the nests of the small birds in peace. From the earliest morning hours, they kept up a great noise, fighting and scolding and screeching.

But old Anna shook her head when there was any talk of removing the magpies’ nest. That was as old as the farm, and if anyone disturbed it, something unlucky would surely happen.

Kari had often had a desire to see how the nest up there looked on the inside. It couldn’t be dangerous just to look in there, but the nest was so high up, oh, so high! and the trunk of the tree went so straight up without branches. It would be impossible to climb there.

Suddenly she sprang up, throwing down her primer. The ladder! The ladder behind the storehouse. Why hadn’t she thought of that before? How stupid she had been! But how could she carry the ladder to the tree without anyone seeing her?

Well, she had better wait until the afternoon resting time when all the grown-ups were in the house. Perhaps Ola would help her then if she coaxed him. Just think, there might be an egg in the nest!



Little Kari stood at the top of the ladder, Ola stood below and held it fast.

“Look out now, little one, so that you won’t fall,” said he. “You take a peep into the nest and then come down here as fast as you can. Hear how angry they are! If they only don’t peck your eyes out.”

Yes, really the magpies fluttered around little Kari and screeched and were perfectly horrid as she climbed up. Now she was right near the nest. Oh, dear, how those magpies screeched!

“Stupid things that you are,” said Kari. “I only want to see what your home up here is like.”

She bent forward to the nest. Yes, really there lay three eggs.

“Oh, Ola,” she called, “just think there are eggs here, and oh, if there isn’t that new red hair-ribbon of mine that I had lost.” She pulled the ribbon out of the nest.

The magpies kept on fluttering and screeching around her head but all at once Kari gave such a joyous shout that Ola almost let go of the ladder.

“Oh, Oh!” she took something else from the nest. “Oh, Ola, here are Grandmother’s gold-rimmed spectacles.”

By this time Father and Mother and Anna had come out and were standing under the cherry tree. They knew that something unusual was going on when the magpies made so much extra noise.

Father climbed up on the ladder and the next minute Kari was down on the ground again.

“Oh, my child,” said Mother, “think if the magpies had pecked your eyes out.”

“Help and comfort you, little one, you who have disturbed the mag-

pies' nest," said old Anna. "If only something unlucky doesn't happen now."

"I haven't disturbed the nest," shouted Kari, joyfully. "But I have found Grandmother's gold spectacles and that is surely a piece of good luck!"

XIII

ONE SATURDAY

YOU would scarcely believe how much there was for Kari to do on Saturdays. This Saturday she had been busy from early morning.

First she had helped old Anna in the barn; then helped her to scrub the hall of the house. The stone steps Kari washed entirely alone.

After this, she had brought fresh birch branches for the fireplace and flowers for all of Mother's vases, watered the plants in the window and picked off the dead leaves. She had to wash her doll's clothes, too, and they were now hanging to dry on a string between the currant bushes.

Oh, yes, and there was much more that Kari might have done in the house; but Mother happened to mention that the little lamb Father had promised Kari for her birthday, might be brought that day.

Well! Kari was glad, as you well know.

She rushed to the barn, swept and washed an empty stall and put dry, clean straw in it, for this stall was where the lamb would live.

When this work was done, Kari took a big basket which she could carry on her back but which was so big for her that it nearly touched the ground. This basket was to gather leaves in for the lamb to eat. So

much food would be needed for the long winter it was best to begin to gather them at once, Kari thought.

She went along the bank of the pond, put down her basket where the old willow and small aspen trees were and began to strip off the leaves. Willow and aspen leaves were what sheep liked best and fortunately they were very easy to strip off. As soon as she took hold of them, they fell right into her fist.

Well, well, there is always work to do when one has animals. One must expect that.

Still Kari knew what she wished to be when she grew up. She would be a milkmaid and take care of cows and goats and sheep. But people must never think that they would be allowed to kill any of her animals. No, indeed!

She took hold of a big willow branch and stripped the leaves off so fast that they whirled about her in a cloud.

Quack, quack! Kari pushed the branch to one side so that she could see the pond. A duck was swimming by and a whole brood of small brown ducklings were swimming after her. It seemed to Kari that she had never seen anything so charming.

At once the thought flashed into her mind that she might catch one of the ducklings and put it with Topknot and her one little duck.

Kari went quickly down to the boat, shoved it into the water and rowed as quietly as possible toward the duck and ducklings. They were now among the pond lilies.

Just then the mother duck caught sight of her, quacked to her ducklings, and flew along the water's edge. Her little ones swam after her with their legs almost out of the water and flapping their short

stumpy wings. So the ducks, mother and little ones, were gone before Kari knew what was happening.

“Peep, peep!” sounded from among the pond lily leaves. One duckling had been left behind and was swimming there alone.

Kari rowed quickly to it, and took out her father’s slip-net, which was



just the thing to catch it in, but the moment when she would have caught the duckling, it dived under the water.

But “peep, peep!” it chirped again. It had come up a little farther away. Kari rowed as fast as she could but just as she came near to it, it ducked under the water again, so now Kari sat still in the boat and waited. Perhaps it would come up near the boat and then she could surely get hold of it.

Pshaw! how long it stayed under. Perhaps it would never come up again. Old Anna had said that if a duck was wounded or terribly frightened, it would go to the bottom of the pond and stay there.

The sun was now going down, but the sky and the pond were streaked with gold and the pond lilies shone white and beautiful on the water.

"Peep, peep!" came faintly to her ears. The duckling had come up away over by the steep high mountainside where the water was very deep. Kari rowed to the place. The water there in the shadow of the mountain was as black as coal.

Kari could see no sign of the duckling. The poor little thing must be so tired that it could easily be caught. Kari thought she would now be very sly. She lay down in the boat and began to quack like the mother duck. The little one would be glad then, thinking its mother near, and would come right to the boat.

"Quack, quack, quack!" said Kari softly.

"Quack, quack, quack!" came an answer from the mountain.

Then Kari became frightened. She saw suddenly that it was almost dark and that the water around the boat was pitch black.

"Father, Father!" she called.

"Father, Father!" came a scream from the mountain. Oh, that must be a big troll that lived in the mountain and was now imitating her.

Little Kari was so frightened that she could scarcely breathe. She sat down in the boat and began to row with all her might. She did not dare to look behind her for then she might see the troll himself. At last the boat scraped on the shore.

Little Kari sprang out and almost at the same moment into the arms of her father who stood there waiting for her.

“But little Kari!” said Father. “You know you are not allowed to be out on the water so late. I was frightened when I heard you call me.”

Then Kari told him tearfully how frightened she had been and about the troll in the mountain who had mimicked her.

Father lifted Kari up in his arms and as he carried her home, he told her that there was no such thing as a troll in the mountain or anywhere. What she had heard was only an echo.

Kari threw herself hither and thither in her bed. She could not sleep. The instant she shut her eyes, she heard the duckling’s faint “peep, peep.” Poor little thing! She had not thought about it after she herself had become so frightened.

Perhaps it was still swimming about in the black water calling “peep, peep” for its mother. It must be tired and scared and it was all her, Kari’s fault. She seemed to hear that frightened “peep, peep” in the dark right at her bedside.

Kari could not bear it any longer. She buried her face in the pillow and cried. Oh, she must tell Mother about it. “Mother,” she called softly, “oh, Mother, are you asleep?”

There was Mother right beside her bed. “What is it, my little Kari?”

Then Kari told her all about the duckling, how frightened it had been and how very sorry she was for the poor little thing.

“Oh, but the mother duck would swim about till she found her little one. I am perfectly sure of that!” said Mother. She patted little Kari’s cheek. “Good-night, my dear child!”

And at once, everything seemed to Kari good and safe and all right. She did not hear the duckling peep any more either, for now she felt sure that it was safe with the other ducklings, sleeping under its mother's soft feathers.

XIV

LEAVING HOME

A LONG letter had come from Aunt Hanna asking that little Kari might be sent to her for the vacation. Uncle Peter and Aunt Hanna who was Mother's sister, lived in a little town on the coast. Kari had never seen either Uncle or Aunt but their picture stood on Mother's sewing table. They were holding each other by the hand in this picture and they looked very kind and good.

"They were quite young then," said Mother. "Now they have two boys and two little girls."

Father decided that Kari should go. He himself would go with her for Mother could not leave Grandmother.

"It will do Kari good," said Father, "to be with other children and play with them."

"Everything will be good for her at Hanna's," said Grandmother. "Hanna was always good and kind, even as a child."

Little Kari danced about full of joy. Just think! Mother and Aunt Hanna had once been Grandmother's little girls exactly as she now was Mother's. How queer!

Mother and Grandmother were delighted that Kari should go for this visit. They told her that the town where Aunt Hanna lived was right on the shore of the great beautiful ocean and that near the town there were mountain peaks and cliffs and boulders.

Kari would have her boy and girl cousins to play with. Besides, there was the delightful long journey.

"I shall be just like 'Askeladden,' " said Kari, "going out into the world to seek my fortune."

But old Anna did not look much pleased. She shook her head but said nothing. Out in the kitchen, alone with Kari, she said, "I had such a queer dream last night. I dreamed that I was out in a boat the whole time."

"Have you looked in the dream book, Anna, to see what your dream meant?" asked Kari. She moved her chair to the china closet and pulled down an old ragged book from there.

"Dream and Prophecy Book—the Newest and Most Complete." This was printed in big letters on the cover of the book; inside written in ink, was, "This book belongs to Anna Torsdatter Evjua."

Old Anna took the book and turned the leaves carefully and importantly. "Yes, here you can see for yourself. It comes under B—'Boat—To be in an unsafe situation'—I have known this the whole time, yes, like a pain and tightness in my heart ever since this journey was decided upon."

"I dreamed last night too, Anna," said Kari. "I dreamed that I was with you in the pantry and skimmed the cream. Now let's see what that means. It will be under 'cream,' I think." They turned the leaves. "'Cream—To skim cream means that great pleasure is

to be had.' There! Now you see, Anna, it isn't the least bit dangerous, only pleasure—nothing but pleasure."

"Well, well," said Anna. She took the book and looked at it once more. "Well, I hope so. But you will very likely come home so full of conceit and with city ways like that silly daughter of the country store-keeper, and nothing at home here will be good enough any longer; and I shall miss your good help in the barn."

Little Kari grew very serious. She climbed up and seated herself upon Anna's big lap, threw her arms around Anna's neck and pressed close to her.

"Oh, but you know, Anna, I should never have dared to go away from the animals and all the work here, if I had not had you to depend upon. For you will do everything just as I would do it myself. And I promise you that I shall never be silly—never, that I promise you."

Old Anna wiped her face on her apron. "I can't understand how I have got such a cold. But I wish you to take with you this book, little Kari." She laid the dream book in Kari's lap. "For when you dream, you can look in the book and find out what is going to happen, so you can be a little prepared for it."

Ola came in to get his coffee. He sat down upon the long bench. "So you are going out on a journey, are you, little one? How many queer things you will see! You will be scared when you see the train. Perhaps you will see a flying machine—and the big America boat, also! Oh, me!"

Martha, the seamstress, was running the sewing machine all day long. And little Kari had to try on dresses and try them on over and

over again. It seemed as if the trying on would never be done. And she must stand stock still—oh, how tired she got of standing still! And Martha talked all the time with her mouth full of pins.

“I should have liked so much to have dark cloth in my dresses,” said Kari, “for that looks so clean because spots don’t show on it.”

But Mother did not agree at all with this idea.

At last everything was ready and Kari sat with her father in the cariole in the farm-yard. Blakken stood before it and Ola stood at the back holding the reins.

It was not so easy at that last moment to be ready to go, thought Kari. There were so many things she must ask and remind old Anna to do while she was gone.

Mother and Grandmother and old Anna were standing beside the cariole. Kari had said good-bye to them all, and to the animals also, the cows, sheep, hens, and the pig and pussy cat.

“You mustn’t forget to water the flowers, Mother. And Anna, remember that the chickens that will be hatched this week must have finely chopped egg to eat the first two days.”

“You will never be ready to go, little Kari,” said Father, smiling.

So Blakken moved quietly out of the farm-yard. Kari waved good-bye to Grandmother who was now standing on the steps, but Mother and Anna walked by the side of the cariole as far as the gate.

“May everything be good for you, my dear!” said Anna.

“Yes,” said Kari, “and you know I have the dream book in my bag here.”

“You must be a kind, good little girl, so that Father and Mother may be pleased with you,” said Mother.

"Oh yes, Mother," said Kari, "I am not a little child now, you know."

The cariole swung through the gate and old Anna went behind the trees. Kari stood up in the cariole looking back and waving to Mother



who stood alone now out on the roadside. Then all at once, Kari felt that after all she was only a little child—a very little one. She had a lump in her throat; one last wave to Mother and they were around the turn in the road, so Kari could not see her any more. She pressed close to her Father and laid her face in his coat. How good it was that he was here!

"Well now, see pussy cat," said Ola. "It is running after little Kari." But Kari only pressed her face still deeper into Father's coat—she

would not look at the cat. After a little while Father said, "Now Kari, you must sit up and look behind you. Isn't it beautiful?"

So Kari looked through her tears at the green birch grove, the buildings at home she could no longer see. Puss had gone back home, having understood at last that Kari was really going away.

"Oh, see, Father," shouted Kari, "Mother is saying good-bye to us again with the flag."

Yes, high above the green birch grove, the flag floated against the blue sky in the light summer breeze.

And this was the way little Kari began her journey out into the big, big world.

XV

THE JOURNEY

UH huh huh” cried little Kari. She had seated herself on her small suitcase in the middle of the platform. She rubbed her face with her handkerchief so hard that her nose was red as fire.

The station master and an old woman stood beside her. The old woman wore a big blue apron. She had put down her scrubbing pail and stood with both hands on the handle of her scrubbing broom.

“Did anyone ever hear of anything so sad?” said she. “Poor young one!”

“Why did you get off the train before you had come to the right station?” asked the station master. “What an idea,” he added, “to send such a baby alone on the train.”

“Alone did you say?” said Kari looking up at him. “I was not traveling alone at all, I would have you know,” she said angrily but still sobbing. “I was traveling with my Father.”

“That is still worse, it seems to me,” the man said crossly. “Your Father is certainly old enough to look after you.”

At this Kari stared at him with wide open angry eyes. “Humph!

you think it was his fault, do you? Indeed it wasn't. It was all my fault that's what it was." Uh huh huh—she was crying again.

"It doesn't matter to me whose fault it was you are sitting here alone on your suitcase—that is the main thing," said the man. "Where are you bound for, any way?"

"I am going to Aunt and Uncle in the city," sobbed Kari.

"Is that so?" he laughed. "So that's where you are going. Where do you come from? Do you know that?"

"You ask such foolish questions," said Kari wiping her eyes. "Of course I do. I come from home."

"Ha ha! You come from home do you?" laughed the station master again. "Is that so, young lady? I thank you for the information."

"I am not a young lady," said Kari, still crying. "And you are not a bit kind."

"Poor child!" said the old woman. "Never mind him. He's just teasing you. Poor young one! How did this really happen?"

"Well," said Kari, "my Father got off the train to buy oranges for me and he was gone a long time, it seemed to me; then the whistle blew and I was so afraid the train would leave him behind, that I took my bag and jumped out. And then the train started away without me; and Father stood there on the last platform. Uh huh! I waved and he waved but the train did not stop. It just went on faster and faster—and now I can never get on it again." She hid her face in her handkerchief.

"So, so! my child," said the old woman. "There's no danger you understand. You'll surely find your Papa again, so don't cry any more."

“You’ll have to come with me to the station,” said the station master. “We have a room there for lost articles. We’ll have to put you in there.”

“No, I won’t go there,” said Kari clutching her bag firmly. Then she turned to the old woman. “Won’t you let me stay a little while with you? For you know I don’t know anyone here except Father and he isn’t here.” Her lips began to tremble again.

“Yes, indeed, you surely may do that, my child, but you must promise me not to cry for you will hear from your Papa in the morning; that I am sure of. I’m just through with my work for the day and am going home now.” She rolled up her apron and put it into the pail. “So if you will be happy with me, come along.”

“You are kind, you are,” said Kari, smiling.

“Your bag I will keep here; for your Father’s name and your Uncle’s are both on the label,” said the station master.

As Kari and the old woman walked along the road with the pail between them, Kari said, “You are tremendously kind. But that man at the station—”

“Oh! never mind him,” said the woman. “He is always like that, cross, quarrelsome, and teasing; I have never seen him different, as long as I have been cleaning at the station. It will soon be a life time that we have been there—both of us. He lives entirely by himself, too.”

“Poor man,” said Kari. She began now to pity him. “I really wish he would get a child then he wouldn’t be so alone. Don’t you think he would be happy if he had a child to take care of? Or maybe he has the toothache or a corn on his foot—for old Anna at our house always

says that when a man is cross and disagreeable, that is often what makes him so. My, but old Anna knows a lot, you may be sure of that!"

"You are a nice little girl," said the old woman. "What is your name?"

"Just think that I have forgotten to tell you that; my name is Kari Westrock—you can just think of North, South, and East and then it is Westrock; but at home they call me only little Kari and you must do that too. What is your name?"

"My name is Maren Melsom."

They had now come to a little low house with one window towards the road. The window was filled with flowering plants.

"Well, here is where I live and here is where you are to stay with me tonight," said Maren.

They wiped the dust from their feet on the pine branches that lay on the stone steps.

"Oh what a pretty little house you have!" said Kari. "Is that your cat, that one that sits on the fence and has a white spot on its forehead? And just think! It seems to me you look as if you ought to be called Maren Melsom. It is such an unusual name."

It was cosy in Maren's low room with the small window. There were rag mats on the floor and the light coming through the greenish glass of the window had a greenish tinge. It wasn't long before the smell of coffee filled the room and soon all three, Maren, Kari, and the cat, sat at the white scoured table and Maren had a loaf of bread and molasses and Kari said, "It seems just as if I had known you always. I was lucky to meet you the first time I was alone out in the world." She had already told Maren about all those at her home, Mother, Grand-

mother, old Anna, and Ola, the farm boy, and about herself who was out traveling and was to visit her Aunt and Uncle in the city.

“Are you quite sure you are not sister to old Anna who lives with us?” asked Kari. “It seems to me you are so alike, you two.”

Yes, Maren was perfectly sure she was not Anna’s sister.

“My, what beautiful plants you have, Maren Melsom! That fuchsia and that bleeding heart are very flourishing.”

“Why you even know the names of my flowers, don’t you? And they are beautiful and flourishing even if I do say it myself. The bleeding heart is easy to grow you know.”

“Yes, we have exactly the same plants at home,” said Kari. “But you have no myrtle. Old Anna has myrtle in her room, if you’ll believe it. It is awfully old for she planted it to make her bridal wreath of. She had made her wedding dress and everything and they are lying in a box with moth paper and tansy, for she hasn’t needed it yet because he went to America and America you know is very, very big. It is so big that he got lost right away and she never found him again. Now she can never marry because the dress is too small for her. And besides she is so old now that she would have to be a grandmother at once and that she couldn’t be because she has no children you know. But the myrtle stands there and grows and grows. You have no idea how very large it is, and yet Anna cut it when Mother was a bride. Old Anna you see had taken care of Mother ever since she came into the world and after that she took care of me too, and Anna says that I shall have a bridal wreath from that myrtle too, when I need one. There is no one now that I like well enough to marry for Mother took Father first, you see.”

That night Kari slept in a four post bedstead in Maren's bedroom with a coverlet stuffed with feathers over her. Late in the evening a boy had come from the station with the message from Father that Kari was to get up early and take the first train to the city, where Father would be waiting at the station. Don't worry or be afraid and give my greetings to Maren Melsom. That was the message Father sent.



He had talked over the telephone with the station master so he knew about everything.

"Just as if I needed to be afraid when I was so lucky as to have met you," said Kari to Maren Melsom who stood and tucked the covering close around Kari in the bed. Then Kari crept under the cover and said her evening prayer for Father and Mother and all at home, from

the cow to the chickens which would come into the world about this time; and she didn't forget to give thanks that Maren Melsom had been sent to her at the station when she for the first time was out alone in the world. She put her head out again and called Maren Melsom who came softly in her stocking feet.

"Can't you get to sleep? Aren't you comfortable?"

"Oh yes, it is only that at home I always have some one to hug when I say good night. So I wanted to ask if I mightn't hug you a little."

So Maren Melsom leaned over little Kari and let herself be squeezed by two small child arms. A little while after Maren came quietly into the bedroom again. Little Kari slept with a smile on her lips. On top of the covers lay the cat with the white spot on her forehead and slept too. Maren stood a moment looking at them, then she took the cat in her arms, and stroked Kari's light hair gently. "Well, if I had only had such a child as this one then the time would never seem long," said old Maren Melsom.

XVI

KARI MEETS HER FATHER AGAIN

EARLY, early next morning Maren and Kari strolled hand in hand over to the station; Kari had slept the whole night. She was rather disappointed that she had not dreamed anything. She had counted all the windows and doors before she went to bed. One should always do that when sleeping in a strange place for then the dream will come true, old Anna says. But Kari had not dreamed of anything so it was of no use that she had counted the windows and doors.

The air was sparkingly clear so early in the morning and the grass along the road had big dew drops that flashed and twinkled in the sunshine. The smoke went straight up from the chimneys of the small houses that stood along the way.

"Isn't it delightful just to breathe so early in the morning," exclaimed Little Kari.

"And we can smell coffee being cooked everywhere," said Maren. "There is no one but you and me and the birds and the station master who are out so early in the morning."

At the station he stood, a stout man with stripes on his cap. "Good morning, good morning," he greeted them. "So here you come with

our little runaway," he said to Maren. And to Kari, "How did you sleep last night? Oh, I don't need to ask; you have such bright eyes and rosy cheeks that you must have slept well. You are certainly a great little girl." Then he took her by the hand and led her to the train that came rushing noisily into the station. Kari had a compartment by herself. "Now you can lie here on the seat, and sleep till you reach the city," said the station master. "Then we'll be perfectly sure that you will not get lost again," he said smiling. Then he gave her a paper bag. "Here is something for you to munch if you don't get to sleep right away."

Kari thanked him curtseying as she had been taught to do and said, "It is too bad that I have to travel so soon again, for I have to say good-day and good-bye almost at the same time. Well, good-bye, Maren Melsom, and don't forget that you are to come to visit me when I get home again. And if you like it at our house with us, then you can bring your cat and stay with us always."

Then Kari waved good-bye from the car window to her two new friends, while the train started slowly out from the station. Very soon the station master and Maren looked like small dots on the platform but even then Kari could see that they waved to her. She sat down and opened the package the station master had given her. There lay a tempting fresh coffee cake and a lollipop.

"Well, my little Kari!"

Kari sprang up from the seat and rubbed her eyes. "Father! Father! Oh my darling Father!" There he stood in the doorway, smiling for joy. And suddenly Kari threw herself upon him hugging him.

"And why in the world did you run away from me?" he asked as he embraced her.

Kari told him everything and Father laughed and Kari laughed. "You had better not tell Mother about it," said Kari, "or she will think that you can't take care of me and then you won't be allowed to travel alone with me another time."

"Oh, now you mustn't be quite so independent," said Father. "If I'm not mistaken, you did not feel quite so independent when you stood alone at the station and the train moved away from you."

"Well, it isn't at all difficult to travel alone," said little Kari. "There are so many kind people in the world, it seems to me."

"But what have you on your lips, child? They are bright red."

"That," laughed Kari, "is only from a lollipop the kind station master gave me."



XVII

WITH AUNT AND UNCLE IN THE CITY

WELL! that the city should look like that, little Kari had never imagined. There were just small painted houses that stood close together with fences between. Lilacs, currant bushes, flowers, and carrots grew here exactly as they did at home. There was a flagpole in almost every garden, flagpoles with a bright silver ball on the top. Yes and there were big houses, too, among the others. The house where Uncle lived, that was big but it was surely very, very old. The school-house was big and new and beautiful, and then there was a Moving Picture Theater. Then there were big brick buildings and shops around the market place. The streets were made of stone with tufts of grass growing here and there in the cracks. They were not very nice streets. Kari was much disappointed.

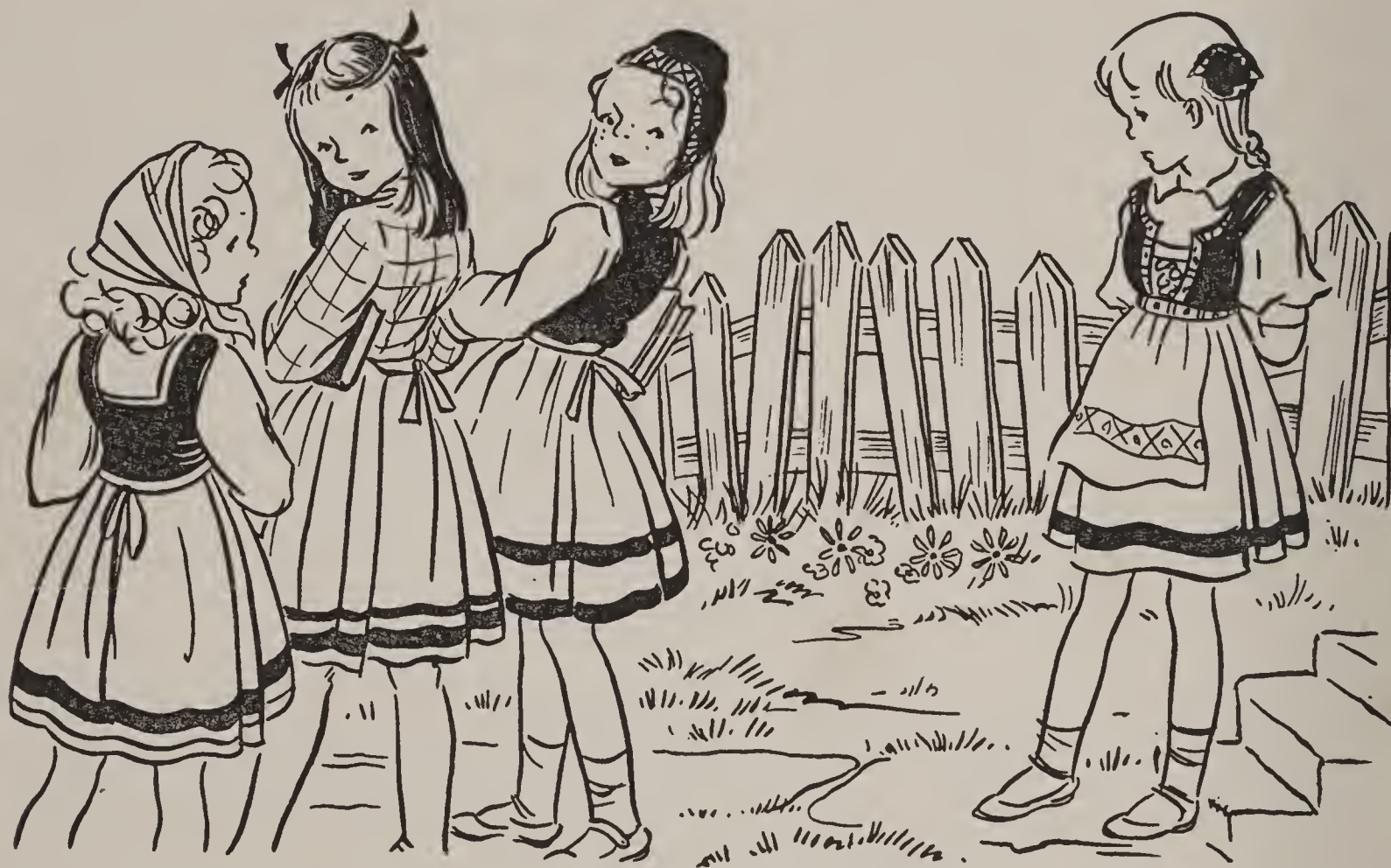
“I have never in the world seen such a little city,” said Kari to her cousin Metta who was already in the third class, and put on a great many airs Kari thought.

“Pooh!” said Metta. “How you talk! You who have only lived in the country all your life and never been in a city before.”

“Yes, but that was real country,” said Kari, “but this isn’t a real city. I know how a city should look. Here there isn’t a single skyscraper.”

“You don’t need to tell us it is the real country you come from,” answered Metta. “That we can easily see with our own eyes.”

She sniffed scornfully and laughed, turning to her two best friends, and the three went away arm in arm whispering together. “Oh you



Kari Blockhead! Do you braid the cow’s tail at your home?” Metta called back to Kari.

At this her friends, Christine and Lisa, laughed aloud. They thought Metta very witty.

Well, Cousin Metta was like that. It was all right for her to put

on airs, she who had coal black hair and brown eyes, and her friend Lisa had natural curls but they were only brown. Christine, on the other hand, had fiery red hair and freckles; but she would always do anything that Lisa and Metta wished and that was why she was a friend of theirs. Kari understood all this well enough.

"If you are only kind, you are pretty," old Anna always said, but old Anna had never been in the city.

These girls made fun of Kari's short thick braids that Grandmother was so proud of; but little Kari herself saw that there was hardly any color in her hair, it was so light and her eyes were only grey.

Her cheeks were ruddy and downy like a peach, Uncle said. Kari didn't know what kind of an animal a peach was and she didn't dare to ask for fear they would laugh at her. They did that so often any way.

Well, Mother, Grandmother, and old Anna, they were satisfied with her but they didn't know how other little girls looked with black hair and curls and everything.

Cousin Nils was two years older than Metta. He had black hair, too, and was good looking and he called Kari little one. But he was so big and grown-up that he didn't play with girls, he said.

Then there was Cousin Peter. He had light hair and was only a very little bit older than Kari. He wasn't afraid of having dirty hands and was awfully nice.

"He belongs to our side of the family, he does," old Anna would say. That was what she always said when there was someone in the family she liked; and Kari liked Peter.

"You are more like real folks," she said to him, and then they were

good friends, especially when she could help him set up the wheel of his sawmill in the brook over in the field. She had learned this of Ola, the farm boy at home.

"Why you are as handy as a pocket in a shirt," said Peter, and Kari blushed, she was so proud and happy.

The youngest child of Aunt and Uncle was little Maia, she looked exactly like Grandmother, Aunt said. Grown-up folk are queer when they can say such things, Kari thought, for Maia had almost golden hair, not grey like Grandmother's. Maia was not either bad or good for she was only four years old and everybody loved her.

Uncle and Aunt were kind, especially Uncle. He winked so roguishly, pinched Kari's cheeks and asked her to take a bit of his red apple.

Aunt talked so much and so often about manners, especially after Father had gone home. "Look at Metta," Aunt would say to Kari as if Father and Mother and Grandmother and old Anna didn't know how to bring up children.

No, she wouldn't look at Metta too much. She was perfectly sure that Ola at home would say that Metta was a "ninny." Besides she had promised Anna that she wouldn't come home with "city frills." "For there is no need of that with the cows," said Anna.

Kari was to take over the care of the cows when Anna couldn't do it any more and she would then be the dairy maid. They were welcome to tease her and call her "Kari Blockhead" and call her braid a "cow's tail" though she didn't braid her hair after Father went home for the braids were rather funny when she did it herself.

The cousins might say "My! what pale cheeks," and call her "big Bertha" and such things; but her manners they should not be allowed

to tease her about for Father's and Mother's sake. Kari got a big lump in her throat when she thought of all those at home who loved her and only wished to make her happy. She would never tell Mother how they laughed at her for making such deep curtseys. Poor Mother! It was so long since she had been in the city. Metta only bowed her head when she greeted anyone and Kari stood before the mirror in her room and tried to imitate Metta.

When Father went home, Kari sent her greetings to everybody. It would take him a whole day to go round to the cow, Blakken, the pigeons, the sheep, and the pigs, and to the small chickens that had come after she had gone away and so didn't know her. She had promised Father that she would be a brave, good girl and not let Uncle and Aunt know if she were homesick during the weeks that she was to stay there. So she never shed a tear when Father went away and waved to her from the car window for Uncle and Aunt and the others were there. Cousin Nils went with Father to spend his vacation at the farm. "Exchange of children," Father said.

Kari had the little blue guest chamber entirely to herself. It seemed very strange the first night when she went to bed alone. There came a lump in her throat which she could not get down or up.

Then she saw that Aunt Hanna had set Father's and Mother's photographs on the bedside table. They looked at her, both of them—and she heard distinctly that the pictures spoke to her. "Good night, little Kari," they said. "Now you must be a kind brave child so that Father and Mother may be pleased with you; and remember we are loving you very, very dearly." All this the pictures seemed to say to Kari.

It was awfully kind of Aunt Hanna to put the photographs there. As she lay under the flowery down coverlet and realized that the flowers on it were exactly like the flowers spoken of in her evening prayer, she felt very happy. Oh that kind Aunt Hanna!



XVIII

HOMESICK

NOW it had come although Kari had fought against it all she could. She longed so for home and longed so much that she could scarcely eat or sleep any more.

"I think you hide yourself around in corners often during the day," said Aunt Hanna.

Yes, that Kari had to do because she had promised Father that she would be a brave girl, so she must hide herself or someone might see her when she cried.

The homesickness had come in good earnest yesterday morning when she took the pail of milk from the milkman. There came to

her the smell from the barn and stable. Besides, there was the odor of tobacco, just like the tobacco that Ola used. She could not keep from telling this to the milkman. And so they became friends.

"I wish I might ride with you," she said a little wistfully.

Well, the milkman saw no harm in that and as soon as Kari had taken the milk into the house she went with him. She rode around in the little town and delivered milk to the policeman, Carlson, and to the minister and others.

Per Moen, the milkman, was from a farm far above the town. He understood perfectly well that Kari longed for her home. Nothing could make him live in the city, he said. He had a wife, a colt, cows, lambs, and children of his own.

As he talked Kari could see them all distinctly as if they were before her. Even his five children who, she felt sure, had red hair for their father's hair was red.

"If I get too homesick," said Kari, "I'll take a trip up to your farm and help your wife in the barn and with the children."

She promised to go with him again the next morning but that she was not allowed to do. Aunt Hanna did not like to have Kari drive around with the milkman. Now Kari was sadder than ever.

"Let me have a look at you, little Kari." Aunt Hanna held her out at arm's length. "I really believe that you are homesick."

Then Kari threw her arms around her aunt's neck and burst into tears and sobs that she could not stop.

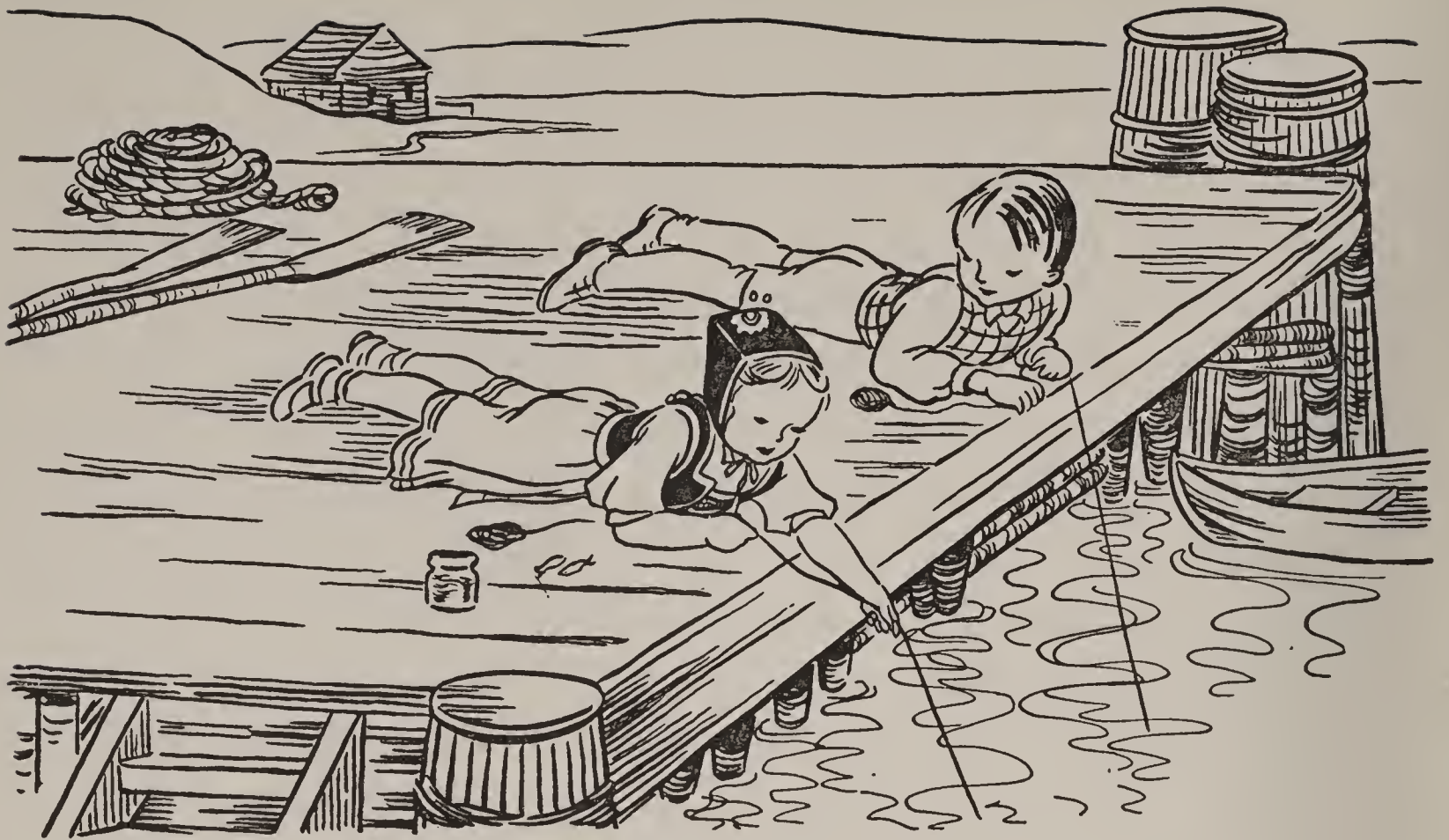
"You are all so kind," she said. "It is not that but I am sad because there is only the sea and the sky on one side and besides we have just had new little chickens at home. Then there's old Anna who can hardly

get along without me for she was quite miserable when I came away. I am very useful at home, you see."

"Yes, you are doubtless both a brave and useful little girl, Kari," said Aunt Hanna drying Kari's tears. "Only today I was thinking I would ask you to clean out the pigeon-house in the barn attic. Poor things, they haven't had a clean house up there for ever so long."

And so it was that Kari forgot her homesickness. A little while after there came a lot of dust and dirt from the opening in the barn under the roof where the pigeons lived, and they fluttered all about outside in great excitement.

Uncle stopped in his walk through the garden, took his pipe from his mouth, smiling to himself; for from the barn loft he could hear Kari sweeping and cleaning and singing cheerily as she worked.



XIX

LUCK IN FISHING

LITTLE KARI and Peter lay away out on the farthest end of the wharf and fished. It was roasting hot, the boards of the wharf were hot to the touch. The sea was perfectly calm but even so there was something like life under the wharf where the lazy water washed gently against the posts. Near Kari were two tiny minnows that she and Peter had caught. She must dip the little things in the water very often or else they would dry up in no time and look like two small sticks of wood. She was going to give them to a neighbor's cat, she had thought.

"I believe I shall melt in this heat," said Peter and pushed back the

soft blond locks from his forehead. "Can you understand how my hands can get black so soon? I washed them before dinner in lots of wet water."

No, Kari couldn't understand that either. "They look black but perhaps they are only brown," she said. "Can you imagine why Metta doesn't think it's any fun to fish?" For on the beach Metta was walking arm in arm with her two friends. Besides she was supposed to be looking after her little sister Maia, who was standing almost on her head on the beach filling her small pail with sand and emptying it again. She thought that was fun, but then she was only four years old.

"Oh well," said Peter, "when girls get into the third class then I say 'No thanks.' I have no use for them."

He got up and stretched himself man fashion. "Wait till you are in the second class this fall. You will begin to act silly, too. But girls are born that way and can't help themselves, I suppose."

"Oh," said Kari, "let's throw out our fish lines at the same time and see which gets the biggest fish."

They lay side by side and stared down into the water. They were absolutely motionless so that their shadows should not frighten the fishes away.

"Oh Kari, can you understand how we in this country can send out so much fish? We have been here almost an hour and caught only these two little minnows."

"Yes, isn't it queer?" said Kari.

Just then they heard a great splash in the water, shrieks of horror from many children and loudest of all from Cousin Metta.

"Help! Help! Maia has fallen into the water. Help! Help!"

For a moment everyone stood stiff with fear. Then as little Maia rose and sank again another great splash was heard. Kari had jumped into the water in the very same place where Maia had disappeared. The children cried out the more and grown people came running. Soon Kari's blond head came up. She caught hold of the edge of a boat with her left hand while with her right hand she held tight hold of the back of little Maia's rompers.

"Help me!" she screamed at the top of her voice. "Hurry, hurry! Help! Help!"

Just then a man came springing from the boat to boat and instantly pulled the two children out of the water. What joy!

Later when they were all safe at home again Peter said, "I am sure it was you who caught the biggest fish, Kari."

"How in the world dared you jump into the water, my little Kari, when you can't swim?" asked Uncle as he sat with Maia in his arms.

"I forgot that," said Kari, "and I didn't have time to think. I had to hurry so."

XX

KARI MAKES A NEW FRIEND

PEOPLE in the town called the hill St. John's hill because always on St. John's night, a great bonfire burned there. It could be seen from far out at sea.

Kari sat on the little wooden bench looking at the view. Below lay the town, the wharf, and the boats bobbing up and down on the big waves; for the strange thing was that even when there was no wind, there were always those waves. They were very long rolling waves caused by the swell in the ocean. That was what Pilot Jensen said and he knew about waves.

The ocean stretched so far out that it seemed as if there were no end to it for it met the sky away away out there. Kari couldn't bear to look out over the ocean. She was glad that her home wasn't in that direction. She turned around on the bench and looked inland. Beyond a stone wall with barbed wire on top were big green clover fields of grain that belonged to the Veilo Estate. An avenue of linden trees led up to the mansion which was a long low building. Kari saw only a little bit of the red tiled roof of the house between the leaves. But beyond all this lay one mountain ridge after another and Kari knew that behind

one of these ridges lay *home*. She felt very very far away from home now. The only thing that home and she had the same here was the sun, moon, and stars, otherwise there was nothing the same. And it seemed as if the moon had a different face here. It didn't look joyful somehow, while at home it always had a happy expression.

An old woman came and sat down on the bench with Kari, leaned wearily on her cane and gazed out over the sea. Kari glanced shyly at her. She must be terribly old for under her black sunbonnet there was a mass of grey hair. Her eyes were very dark, almost black. A nose—well, Kari had seen such a nose before on a deacon—long and thin with a hump on it.

To be on the safe side, Kari moved to the farthest end of the bench. But the old woman didn't even look at her, only sat still and had a vacant look as if she saw nothing. Kari glanced sideways at her again. She cleared her throat carefully, "Ahem, ahem." No, the old woman didn't move an eyelash. Well, it was sure that there wasn't any harm in her she looked so sad. Perhaps she too was homesick or was grieving for something. She was old and it was so sad to be grieving, Kari knew that very well, so she moved closer up to her and said, "Don't be so sad even if you have something to be sorry about. There are many who are worse off than you in the world."

The old woman turned and looked at Kari with her dark eyes. "Why do you say that, my child?" she asked.

"Well," said Kari, "Father always says that we should be glad because we aren't worse off—because there are so many who have much more trouble than we have."

"But why do you think that I have trouble?" asked the old woman.

"You look so sad and lonely," answered Kari.

The old woman smiled and looked more closely at her. "You're surely a queer little one," she said. "And if I look sad it may be because I have no little girl like you who can say so many wise things. For I did many years ago have a little girl like you."

Then she told Kari that her child had grown up, had gone to a foreign land and married there and died after a couple of years. She left a little boy.

"Oh, that was really a sad story," said Kari. "No wonder you sit here and look out over the ocean. How strange that we are alike only that I look towards the mountains. But don't think any more about that sad story," said Kari patting the old woman's cheek. "If you like, I can share my luncheon with you. Perhaps you are hungry," she continued, opening her package of lunch. "Here is a sandwich with bologna, that you may have, and I will take the one with goat's milk cheese. A bologna sandwich is the best I know," she added.

The old woman took the offered sandwich. So the two sat there side by side eating, and she thanked Kari for giving away her best sandwich. While they sat there Kari told that she was visiting her Uncle. And that she longed so for home and Father and Mother and Grandmother and old Anna. She told about Fageros whose calf was to be named Karos after her. Kari told her everything and the old woman listened attentively.

"I haven't seen a real cow since I left home," said Kari.

"You'll have to visit Mrs. Dove at Veilo," said the old woman, "for there are many cows there."

"To Veilo? To Mrs. Hawk, for that is what all the children in

town call her? No thank you. I should not dare to do that. Don't you know that she is very cross and stingy?"

"Is that so?" asked the woman. "Is that what they say?"

"Why don't you know that?" asked Kari. Kari pointed to the stone wall. "Only see how she has put barbed wire on top of the stone wall so that no one can go into her grounds without tearing themselves to pieces. Well, but I crept under the wire one time, I really did. That time I plucked daisies for the mother of Pilot Jensen, and I tore that pretty dotted dress of mine. It is red with black dots, you know. Peter called it my tadpole dress because he thinks the dots look like tadpoles. It was torn so badly that Aunt Hanna had hard work to mend it. But she wasn't angry with me when she knew I had picked the flowers for Pilot Jensen's mother. You know she has to be in bed all the time."

"No," the old woman shook her head. "No, I don't know her."

"Don't you know Pilot Jensen's mother?" Kari was really shocked. "She who came from Italy's sunshine and married the pilot's father? She has told me all about it when I have taken flowers to her. She has big gold rings in her ears, but she isn't pretty any longer."

"And so you crept in under the barbed wire to get flowers for her, did you?"

"Yes, indeed," Karl was very earnest. "It was almost impossible to get through it. It was away over there but there it is easier for no one can see us from the house. Just think! right back of the barbed wire here, it is full of strawberries. I have peeped over there and seen them."

"You don't say that there are strawberries there?" The old woman got up and went over to the stone wall.

"You can't get them without tearing your clothes. Would you like some berries very much?" asked Kari looking at her. "But think if anyone saw us! It is a long time since Mrs. Dove picked wild strawberries. Besides she has the big garden and all the hothouses and there she has grapes and melons. Yes, I think she has enough," said Kari. "I will creep over the wall and get some strawberries for you for I have decided to write to Mrs. Dove and ask her pardon for picking daisies and berries for two old women. You can come and visit me at my home, for there no one is as rich as Mrs. Dove and there is no barbed wire anywhere, and there you can pick flowers and berries wherever you wish."

Kari lay flat on top of the low stone wall.

"Be careful that you don't hurt yourself, child," called the old woman. "Wait a minute and I'll try to hold up the wire while you creep under."

"Look out for your hands," said Kari, "for they are the whitest and thinnest hands I have ever seen in my whole life. You can bend a little to one side," she continued. "So that the lady of Veilo won't see a smitch of you, for I will take all the blame myself, you see."

"You are surely a funny little girl," said the old woman and bent over as Kari had told her to do. "Do you find any berries?" she whispered.

"Did you say berries?" laughed Kari from behind the wall. "They are so big and ripe and there are such lots of them."

A little while after she came red and warm, under the wire again with two straws strung full of berries. "Please take them, they are all for you," said she. But her new friend would not have it so. Kari must sit beside her on the bench and they ate together each taking a berry in turn from the straw.

"Aren't they good?" said Kari.

"Yes, they are delicious," said the woman. "I have but one wish now, and that is that you will give Mrs. Dove the other strawful. I think she would be awfully pleased. It is not certain that she is so very



happy. She has her sorrows too, I think, so if there came a good little Kari to her then I'm sure she would be glad."

Kari listened with her eyes grown round and serious. "Just think! I never have thought anything like that, thank you for telling me. I shall pick some for her tomorrow."

"Can't she have the straw you have left?" the old woman looked at Kari.

"No, she isn't going to have that," said Kari, "for that you are to

have all for yourself." She threw her arms about the woman and hugged her tight.

"Thank you, little Kari," said the old woman. Then she held Kari out from her at arm's length gazing into her eyes. "You are a good little girl and I should like so much to have you for a little friend. You have already shown yourself so friendly, but what will you say when I tell you that I am none other than Mrs. Dove of Veilo."

Kari stared at her in utter amazement. "Are you really?" she stammered. "Poor thing! But I'll like you just as well even if you are, for you can't help that. But aren't you a great one?" Kari began to laugh. "Didn't you hide behind the stone wall so that no one at Veilo should see that you were getting berries?"

Mrs. Dove laughed with Kari. "But it was you who persuaded me to do it."

"I think we were each as bad as the other," said Kari. Then she walked to the big gate of the avenue and there seemed no end to all that they had to say to each other.

Afterwards Kari sprang joyously down St. John's hill so fast that the stones rolled after her. On her way she stopped to pick a wild pansy or a bluebell that grew in the small crevices of the rocks and then ran on again. Tomorrow she was to go to Veilo and see cows and horses and everything.

Uncle and Aunt were giving a dinner party that evening and Metta, Peter, and Kari were to greet the guests and say good night before going to bed.

"Mrs. Dove from Veilo is here, too," whispered Metta importantly.

"She is the grandest lady we have in the town. She hardly ever goes to parties she is so aristocratic."

Just then Uncle, Aunt and Mrs. Dove came over to the children.

"Mrs. Dove wishes to speak to Kari," said Uncle. "Have you ever met Mrs. Dove?" he continued.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Dove, "Little Kari is a good friend of mine, isn't that so, Kari?"

Kari saw that Mrs. Dove had long grey curls and a black silk dress and was like an old picture, she was so beautiful. But she was also the same person who had sat on the wooden bench upon St. John's hill; Kari saw that instantly.

"Oh yes, we are friends," said Kari throwing her arms around Mrs. Dove's neck.

"Well, I must say," laughed Uncle. "Where did you two meet to become such friends?"

"That is Kari's and my secret," answered Mrs. Dove smiling.

"Yes, that's our great secret that we never will tell," said Kari laughing also.

"You were crazy to throw your arms around Mrs. Dove that way," said Metta when they were alone.

"Pooch! you don't know anything about it. Didn't you see that we were well acquainted?"

XXI

THE TWINS

UGH! all dolls are so tedious to play with,” said Metta. Kari had brought down an old baby carriage from the attic and all of Maia’s baby clothes that Aunt Hanna had given them to play with. These were thrown about everywhere.

“Yes, dolls are so stiff and straight up and down,” said Kari. “You can’t have a real good time with them; a real baby is entirely different. Think if we had two little babies to play with—so little that they had only down on their heads and not hair, who really belonged to us. What fun! Old Anna and I often wished we had a tiny baby, but we have never got one.”

“Perhaps we shall get one soon,” said Metta. She lifted the doll and straightened out the clothes she had put on it. “For Maia is so big now, four years old.”

“I think it would be better if you gave it to us,” said Kari, “because I am the only child we have at home and Aunt Hanna has more than enough to darn stockings for now.”

“Pshaw! I can’t make these clothes fit right,” said Metta, throwing things from her.

"Oh! Oh!" Kari got up from the footstool where she was now sitting, "if we could get hold of two cats and have them for our babies it would be ever so much more fun than playing with these dolls."

"Are you crazy?" asked Metta. "Do you mean that we should dress two cats in baby clothes?"

"Yes, we'll put the baby clothes on them and the little caps on, and lay them down under the quilt, then they will look just like real babies. My cat at home lay on her back and slept on my bed with her forepaws on top of the quilt exactly like a child."

"I choose the grey cat," called Metta, "for our grey puss is so tame and easy to manage." Metta sprang out in the yard and called the cat.

"And I'll go down and borrow the cat from the storekeeper," said Kari and away she went.

A little later the two children sat each putting baby clothes on her chosen cat, cape and cap and all.

"Doesn't it look just like a baby? Did you ever see anything like it before? Looked at from the back it looks very much like a real baby—if you don't see the tail." Kari was delighted. "And they feel so alive when you touch them," she said, "very different from the stiff horrid dolls." And the cats lay quiet on the laps of the little girls and let themselves be petted and dressed.

First of course they had been given as much milk as they could drink. "Then they will be so lazy and easy to manage." So the two cats were laid side by side in the old baby carriage and Metta drew the cover close up so that only their heads showed. The top of the carriage came far forward too.

"Just think! they look so real that we might even take a walk down

in the town with the carriage," said Metta. "Everyone will think we are out wheeling twins."

"But suppose someone wishes to look at them," said Kari.

"Then we can say that they are asleep and mustn't be waked up," said Metta. "Come on! Let's go!" and she began to wheel the carriage.

"Oh, yes, you think you will wheel it the whole time when it was I who thought of dressing the cats," said Kari.

"But it was I who proposed going to town with the carriage," said Metta. "So we can take turns in wheeling it. See how folks look at us," Metta whispered. "They think that we have visitors at home or else that Mother has got twins."

The two little girls went proudly along both holding the handle of the carriage.

"We'll sit here on the bench because that's what all the real nursemaids do," Metta said as they came to the market place, "and everybody can see us."

They straightened out the quilt and talked baby talk to the twins. Two old women from an old people's home sat half asleep beside the children. One of them glanced at the carriage. "Yes, today it is fine weather for a little baby, and such smart little girls you are who can wheel the carriage."

"It isn't just one baby, there are two. They are twins," said Metta, nudging Kari.

"I think you are crazy," whispered Kari.

"Is that so?" The old woman wagged her head as she spoke. "Are they boys or girls?"

"Say they are cats," whispered Kari.

But Metta gave her a strong punch in the side so she dared not say more.

“Who is it that has got twins?” The two old women grew more interested and went over near the carriage.

“It is the mother of the babies,” said Kari.

“If they hadn’t just gone to sleep, we might let you peep at them,” said Metta, “but they are just getting their teeth so they are a little fussy nowadays, and I don’t dare to disturb them.”

“Yes, it is a hard time for the babies, when they are getting teeth. But if you bound some sunflower seeds around each baby’s neck, nobody would believe how that helps.”

“That is good advice,” said Metta. “We’ll have to remember that,” and nudged Kari again.

Kari tried several times to make a sign that they should go but Metta pretended that she didn’t understand.

“I have put the babies well under the quilt because they like to have their noses warm,” continued Metta speaking rapidly.

Suddenly the little mongrel dog belonging to the butcher came along and must have smelled that there were cats in the baby carriage because he ran straight up to it barking angrily with his cross voice. Up came the quilt instantly and out of the carriage flew two white-clad little figures. One climbed up in the big chestnut tree so quickly that the cape stood right out in the air, and there he sat peering down between the branches with his cap still on. The other cat sat in all its finery on top of a load of boxes that was just passing by. Metta and Kari were not slow in turning the empty carriage around and wheeling it homeward as fast as they could.

“Pshaw! It was horrid that that mean little dog should come,” said Metta. “Anyway it was you who planned this. You’re always thinking of something queer and stupid.”



“But it was you who insisted on wheeling the carriage down town,” said Kari meekly.

“Well, I’d never thought of dressing the cats up,” said Metta.

Kari didn’t answer this.

“Did you see how quickly the crowd of children gathered in the market place when the cats sprang out of the carriage? Now I suppose they will talk about it and make fun of us for a long time.” Metta was quite upset at this prospect.

“Yes, there was a swarm of children. I’ve never seen so many in my

life," said Kari, and continued laughingly, "Did you see the faces of the two women when the twins jumped out of the carriage, one climbing the tree and the other on the load of boxes? Oh, you ought to have seen them."

Metta laughed too. "We'll say that we only dressed the cats for the fun of it. Isn't that so?"

"Yes, but that is the truth," said Kari, "for we knew perfectly well that they were cats. But what is the rumpus outside the store? See that great crowd of children. It must be that the storekeeper's cat has come home. Come, let's go the other way, so that none of them will see us."

And the two little girls hurried up a side street. But to their dismay the black curly head of Pilot Jensen's boy was thrust out of a window. He was named Marino because his grandmother was from Italy. There was a wide grin on his dark face and he laughed aloud.

"I can give you news of one of your babies," he said. "It was running fast down an alley, and its coattails stood right up in the air."

XXII

THE LOSS OF THE HOPE

MARINO, son of Pilot Jensen, stood outside of Kari's window whistling to her before she was out of her bed; so early had he come.

"Father has given me the old skiff," he called out. "He gave it to me for my very own. Shan't we, you and I and Peter, row out to Crab Rock?"

"Oh, oh, such fun!" Kari did not take long to get dressed and in a short half hour, the three sat in the old skiff and started off over the fjord.

"Just think! Aunt didn't say anything against my going when I asked her," said Kari.

"No," said Peter, "but you said nothing about going out in that old worn out rotten old skiff," he laughed.

"The skiff is all right," said Marino. "If only the cracks are stopped up."

"It would be a grand submarine boat and we'll christen it *Nautilus*," said Peter.

"Did you say a submarine boat?" Marino stood up and lifted one

oar in the air. His brown eyes were flashing. "You may go out of my skiff at once if you are going to call it names. Isn't skiff good enough for you? Jump out now."

"Are you crazy?" asked Kari. "We are away out in the middle of the fjord."

"Oh, well, Peter boasts that he can swim as well as a cod."

"Peter didn't mean anything against your boat," said Kari trying to make peace. "It is only good boats that can be submarines you know; it hardly leaks at all, just a little in the front and the back, and a little in the middle. Except for that, it is a fine boat. And if I sit and bail it out all the time it will be all right. You, Peter, will help Marino to fix it all up."

So the boys were good friends again, thanks to little Kari.

"Yes, we'll paint it and put the name on it," said Marino. "No one will know it is the same boat."

"What color do you mean to paint it and what name will you give it?" Kari was sitting there red as she could be and bailing out the water as fast as she could.

"*The Hope*," said Marino. "It shall be named *The Hope*."

"If it is to be named *The Hope*, then it ought to be painted light green. I know a song that says something about that. Hope is light green, friendship violet."

"Oh, yes," Marino became very eager. "We'll paint the floor boards and the oars violet so it will mean friendship, too."

All thought this was a brilliant idea.

"If only we knew what we could stop the cracks up with," said Kari as she bailed and bailed.

"Pitch of course, outside and inside, then it will be perfectly water tight," said Peter.

"When it is ready, we'll go out to sea in it and catch some big fish and earn lots of money," said Marino. He looked out towards the sea bracing himself and giving a strong pull at his oars.

"We can make a stock company," Peter proposed.

"Do you think I shall share my fine new painted boat with anyone? No thank you." Marino rested on his oars.

"No, I meant a stock company on the earnings we got from the fish."

"Well that's all right," agreed Marino.

At last they landed safely on Crab Rock Island.

"It was high time we landed," said Kari, straightening her back which was bent from her steady bailing, "for the water ran in as fast as I bailed it out."

"Here it will lie beautifully on the sand," said Marino. He looked at the boat from all sides. "No stones anywhere for it to rub against."

"Well, if it gets more holes in it then I won't bail all the way home," said Kari with determination.

"Did you speak?" asked Marino turning towards her. "What do you think we would take women folk with us if they weren't to make themselves useful?"

Little Kari looked somewhat hurt.

"We brought Kari with us for her own sake, because she was Kari and not because she was a girl," said Peter, looking angry.

The little rocky island lay there in the sun, sand, gray rocks and fine waving grass. A wild rose bush hung over one of the smooth rocks. Little slender bluebells stood in the crevices, bowing to one another.

Farther in on the island were masses of wild pansies with their cross or pleasant faces. Kari shouted aloud with joy. The next thing to do was to put on their bathing suits and catch crabs with which the place was swarming. The children made small pools in the sand, later they let the crabs out again. Then all three lay down in the sand on their backs and stared up into the blue sky where the mackerel clouds floated white and light. High in the air the seagulls flew about playing in the sunshine. The water lay calm and shining except that the heavy swell from the great sea broke against the biggest rocks where the wild rose bush grew. By and by they ate their luncheon.

"The sandwiches did taste good," said Peter as he took the last bite. "Shan't we go around the island to where the boat is and bail it? It must be full of water by this time."

He and Marino went slowly over the sand, discussing the great possibilities of *The Hope*.

Kari had almost dropped off to sleep when she heard a great shout. She jumped up. Peter and Marino came running all out of breath.

"The boat is gone. The high tide has taken it."

Kari looked out over the sea and far far out in the open ocean she could see a little streak, the last glimpse of the skiff now ready to sink, and she was so startled that she watched it without saying a word.

"Lost forever," said Peter, for now the boat sank. They stood still beside each other, and stared out at the place where it had sunk.

Suddenly Kari said, "How shall we get home again?" At this the boys seemed to wake up to what had happened.

"Get home again?" Marino looked puzzled. "We can't swim that long way and we can't walk on water either."

"Yes," said Peter, "and small boats seldom come out as far as this. The fishermen won't come till early tomorrow morning." Peter looked hopelessly towards the town, which they couldn't see because of the other islands that lay between.

"The big boats all go farther out where it is deep, for here it is too



shallow." Marino was in despair. "And I'm hungry already. We'll starve to death before tomorrow morning, and perhaps there won't come any boat even then, either."

"Don't lose courage," said Peter, bracing himself up. "Think of Robinson Crusoe, who was so long on a desert island."

"Well, he was very unfortunate," whimpered Marino. "Besides it was really a desert island where he was," he continued. "And we haven't

even a gun. We may have to stay here many days and have only crabs to eat."

"And I don't like crabs at all," said Kari also getting discouraged.

"And we'll have to eat them raw," said Marino almost crying.

"Think of Robinson," began Peter but did not get any farther.

"I don't care a bit about Robinson." With that, Marino threw himself down on the sand, giving way to loud crying.

Peter and Kari stood still looking down on Marino. When Peter saw Kari's distressed face, he braced himself again and said to her, "Don't worry about him, he isn't a real Norwegian, you know. He's partly Italian." He put his hand on her shoulder and said bravely, "Rely on me, little Kari, I won't leave you in the hour of danger. Don't give up."

Anyone as brave and wonderful as Peter was not to be found in the whole world. Thinking this she smiled at him through her tears. Just then a boat came around the southern point of the island. Peter began to shout at the top of his voice and Kari shook Marino who lay there on the sand crying.

"Marino, see the boat out there. We are saved, do you hear?"

Marino was not slow in jumping up and shouting like the others. The boat turned in toward the island. Yes, she had heard. A woman sat in the boat. When she came nearer they saw that she had a kerchief on her head. In the stern of the boat stood a little lap dog, staring in toward the land. The minute he saw that, Peter said, "Oh, dear! It is the gipsy, Kaisa."

"The gipsy? Oh, tell her to go away again," said Marino.

Little Kari looked at him with startled eyes. "Is she dangerous?" she asked.

"Yes, she is crazy," said Peter running back from the shore with Marino after him.

Kari stood still an instant, then she ran after the others. Peter and Marino had already hidden themselves behind a rock. Now Kaisa's boat scraped on the shore.

Kari turned suddenly, and shouted "Hi! Hi!" waving her arms; then she went quickly over to Kaisa. Crazy Andrea at home was kind if only they did not tease her, she remembered.

"Good day, Kaisa," said she. "You don't know me. My name is Kari."

Then she told Kaisa that their boat had been taken by the tide and that they couldn't get home again. Would Kaisa row them back to the town?

Kaisa's face brightened and she smiled. "Yes, the boat sank," she said pointing out to the ocean.

Then Kari ran back to reassure the frightened boys. "She is so kind and smiling, you needn't be afraid; and you don't need to say a single word. I will do the talking."

So it came about that the two boys sat in the gipsy's boat and rowed, each with one oar. They dared not speak, they were still so afraid. Kari and Kaisa sat in the stern of the boat with the dog between them. Kari talked the whole time about how clever lap dogs were and about their boat that sank; and almost before they knew it, they had reached the wharf. The boys shook hands with Kaisa and thanked her for saving them as Kari had insisted that they should do.

"Kaisa isn't a bit crazy," she said. "She talked perfectly sensibly," but the boys were not convinced.

“It was you who talked the whole time,” said Peter. “Your tongue wasn’t still a minute.”

“It might have been interesting to stay on the island a couple of days,” said Marino bravely.

“H’m, h’m,” said Peter, winking at Kari. “But one thing we will agree on, Marino, and that is that Kari is a star.” Yes, on that they fully agreed.



XXIII

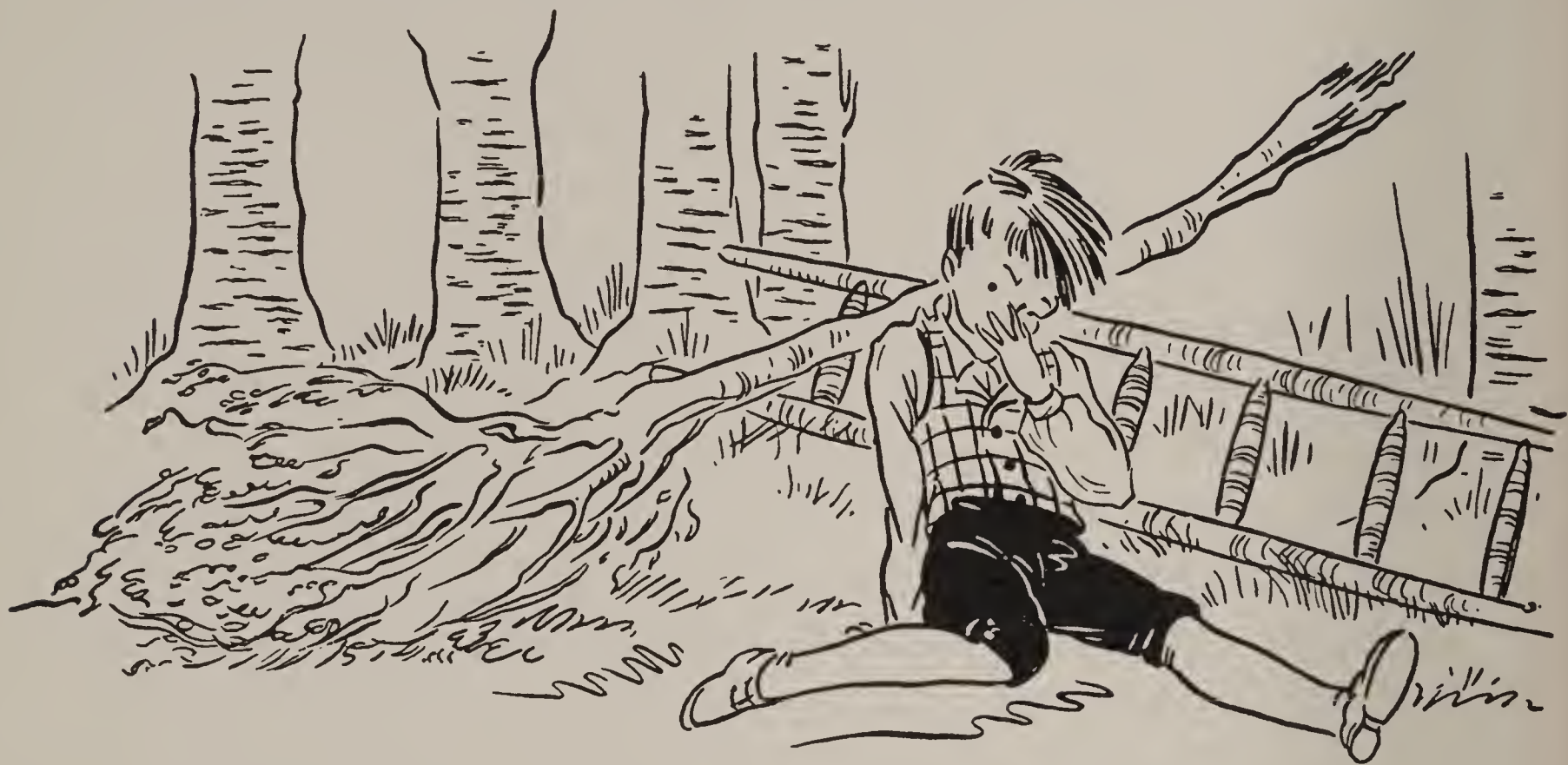
KARI WRITES HOME

DEAR Father and Mother and everybody at home. I am so happy here that you don't need to worry about me. Yesterday, I and Peter, and a boy named Marino, rowed in his skiff to Crab Rock, and the skiff leaked so badly that it almost sank; and while we lay on the sand, it drifted away and went down. Kaisa, the gypsy who is crazy, rowed us home and she wasn't so very crazy and now we are at home again. We had a great deal of fun. One day little Maia came near drowning but she didn't drown after all. And now I am acquainted with Mrs. Dove of Veilo and I have been in the barn there. So now I don't have to crawl under the barbed wire and tear myself to pieces.

I am not homesick at all except in the evening because then we are not playing any more. Yesterday the fire ladder fell down from the wall, because Peter had climbed up and he fell and broke a plum tree and one of his teeth. The tooth was the kind that doesn't come again, and Aunt cried. Hansen's dog has had five beautiful puppies, and I will bring them with me when I come home for I got them all from Hansen. Tell old Anna that at Veilo they milk the cows by electricity. I'll tell about it when I come home, and they have a motor plough but I like better Ola and Blakken.

You mustn't be angry because I have my hair bobbed. In the city no one who isn't old has long hair. When I am at home it will quickly grow out again.

Hansen's children are to be sent to a children's home, but if you can



make a children's home in the servant's house I will bring them all with me when I come home. Answer this right away or they will be gone and then we can't have them. It is difficult to get children and then I'll have somebody to play with.

Today Peter and I are going to climb the steep side of St. John's hill and that will be fun. You mustn't worry about me for Aunt takes such good care of me.

Excuse me that I have nothing to write about. When do you want me to come home? There is no hurry. Many greetings from little Kari.

Do you think Blakken will know me when I come?

XXIV

THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT

HOW many times Kari had emptied her little bank and counted her money, it would be hard to say, but the pile of coins grew larger and larger every time. All that had been sent her from home she had saved, and all that she had earned by running errands for different persons. And so the money in the bank had grown, little by little.

“You shall have a very fine present from me on your birthday, Uncle,” she said, “because you are so kind. But you know that it will take a great deal of money for such a fine present, and I haven’t saved enough yet.”

No wonder that Uncle was excited. “I’m looking forward to it,” he said. “I really wonder whether it is a pipe, for that is what I wish for most of all, or perhaps a new bill fold to hide all my money in so that Aunt shall not get hold of it.”

“You mustn’t ask me many questions,” said Kari, “or I’ll have to hold my lips shut with my fingers; but it isn’t either of the things you have said. Now I won’t say any more, but you never in the world would guess it.” So she shut her mouth tight.

"Oh," said Uncle laughing, "it *is* a pipe."

"Now you see," said Kari, hopping up and down in her enthusiasm. "You never in the world would guess it."

The present was to be a little lamb. Per Moen, the milkman, was to bring it early in the morning on Uncle's birthday. Kari was up in time to receive it. She emptied her bank into Per Moen's brown hands and her silver and copper coins filled them almost full. It was very lucky that Father had sent five crowns the day before towards a present for Uncle, for otherwise she would have had to go in debt for the lamb.

"It has been hard to get this money," she said to Moen, "but I can manage it because you let me have the lamb so cheap. If I had not had enough, I could have dug potatoes or weeded turnips for you to help pay you. Now how glad Uncle will be when he gets the lamb, for he surely had never thought of such a thing."

"Come to me, you little baa-lamb!" she said as Moen lifted the lamb from the milk wagon. "I see you are the fine long-tailed kind. Come to Kari, dear. I know how to take care of such small creatures, I've hardly done anything else since I was born. Come, my little jewel. Dolly shall be your name."

She patted the lamb and hugged it gently. "What did your mother say when you came away from the farm?" she asked it.

"Oh," said Per Moen, "she didn't cry much. This was a twin and so she has one left." He put the money carefully into his big old purse.

"She had her own thoughts about it," said Kari earnestly. "Old Anna at home says that there is no mother that has too many children. There is never one that she wishes to spare. Kari will take good care of you," she said to the lamb as they stood at the garden gate while Per Moen

drove away. "You shall see Per Moen every morning, and send a greeting back to your mother and sister." She lifted the lamb in her arms although it was very heavy for her. "Do you see the beautiful garden, dear? Here is where Uncle lives and in this fine garden you shall go all your days and eat anything you choose. Of course you'd better not go into Aunt's bed of asters or of stock or the carrot bed or things like that; but otherwise you may go wherever you wish. Come now and we will congratulate your new Uncle who is still in bed, for it is his birthday today."

She took from her apron pocket a light green ribbon, and tied it around the lamb's neck. She knocked on Uncle's door, then opened it softly and in she went with the lamb in her arms.

"Congratulations," she called, "here is the present you are to have from me." Her little tanned face beamed with joy. Uncle raised himself up in bed. "Is that for me?" said Uncle, rubbing his eyes. "But how in the world did you—"

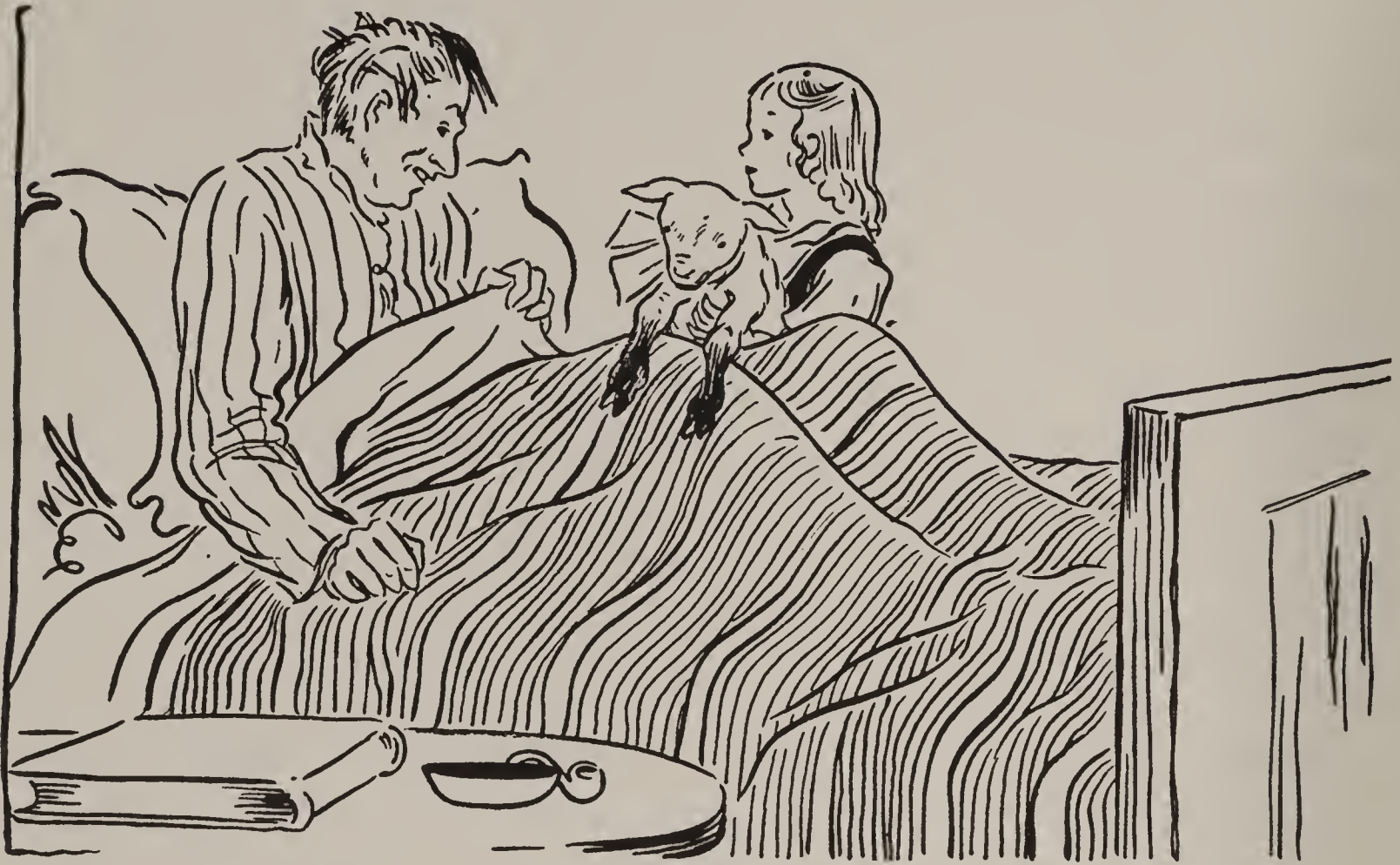
More he could not say for Kari interrupted. "There is nothing I would rather have than a baby lamb. I have bought it with my own money and don't owe anything on it. Aren't you glad?"

"Yes, yes! Never in my life have I been so glad." Aunt laughed with him. "You know how to manage things. A thousand, thousand hearty thanks to you. Come here to me so that I can thank you properly and give you a hug."

"Will you have the lamb in bed with you? There is nothing so clean and innocent as a little lamb." She was about to put it into the bed. "No, no," said Uncle, "it is best to have it on the floor." Kari was kneeling and petting it.

"How in the world could you think of such a present?" asked Aunt.

"Yes—and I who was so sure that I should get a pipe," said Uncle.



"Are you disappointed because it wasn't a pipe?" Kari looked up quickly.

"Oh, far from it! I am so glad that it wasn't a pipe that I can scarcely be still in bed," and Uncle tossed so excitedly about that both Aunt and Kari had to laugh.

"Now you will have to go out," said Kari, "for Aunt is always complaining that you don't get exercise enough. You can go out in the garden and the park and take care of the lamb. One sometimes has to run very fast to catch a lamb, you see."

"Oh, you've thought of everything," said Uncle. "I shall have to ask

my friend the Judge to help me for he needs exercise, too. I can't thank you enough for that lamb, you dear little Kari."

A week had passed since Uncle's birthday and the lamb surely knew Kari for it followed her everywhere. They had been in to call on Pilot Jensen's mother as she lay in bed. They had called on the store-keeper—yes, and even on Mrs. Dove at Veilo. Everybody said it was an unusually beautiful and intelligent lamb and Kari was very proud. She would lie flat on the grass in the garden, looking after it. But it seemed as if the lamb was always going over the garden beds. It didn't pay any attention to the soft green grass.

"Look out for my flowers," Aunt would call from her window.

Looking up Kari would say, "Oh, yes, I will. But really Uncle ought to look after the lamb a little because it is his lamb."

"Tomorrow I'll take a walk with the lamb," he would say, but when tomorrow came he would say the same thing again. Little Kari began to wonder whether Uncle didn't really care for the lamb.

"I don't believe you are really fond of Dolly," she said to him.

"Oh, I love Dolly above everything," said Uncle laughing. But Kari didn't feel quite sure that he meant that.

"Look out for the carrots," again Aunt would call from the window. "I planted them to feed the family not for uncle's birthday lamb to eat."

Oh, dear! There was the lamb in the carrot bed, and Kari would exclaim, "You are too quick, Dolly. You are not allowed to eat anything that Aunt has planted, can't you understand? If it were mine you might eat every bit of it. Poor little lamb! Things aren't easy in this world."

"Do you know what Father said to the Judge yesterday when they were playing cards?" Peter asked Kari. "Well, he said that the world was full of surprises. He had been sure that he would get a new pipe for his birthday and he got a lamb instead."

"Did he really say that? Would he really so much rather have a pipe?" asked Kari.

After this talk, she went about for days pondering as to how she could get a pipe for Uncle since he wanted one so very much. One day when Dolly had destroyed Aunt's bed of asters and had been scolded well for it, Kari decided upon a way out of the difficulty. It wouldn't be easy for the little lamb to be at Uncle's any longer. She could not just say to Uncle that she would take the lamb away either, for then she would be an "Indian giver." But suppose she gave him a pipe instead; that would do. So early one morning, Per Moen drove home with the lamb in his milk wagon again; and Kari stood in the gateway and waved to him with a five crown note in her hand.

"Farewell, Dolly dear," she shouted. "We shall see each other soon again, for when Kari goes home she will come to get you and take you home with her, you poor little lamb."

"Ba-a," answered the lamb.

"Oh, you clever lamb," said Kari. Then she ran down to the tobacco shop at the market place. She had the five crown note back from Per Moen. He was so good and understood everything when she told him how it was. She would pay him back when she took the lamb home with her.

"Uncle, here is the pipe that you have been wishing for," said Kari as she gave him the package.

Uncle looked up in astonishment. "But didn't you give me the lamb?" he asked.

"The lamb I am going to have myself. Now it is at home with its mother until I go and now I owe Per Moen five crowns. You were not really pleased with the lamb, you know."

"I wasn't? When I was looking forward to taking the lamb to the park today, and I loved it so much."

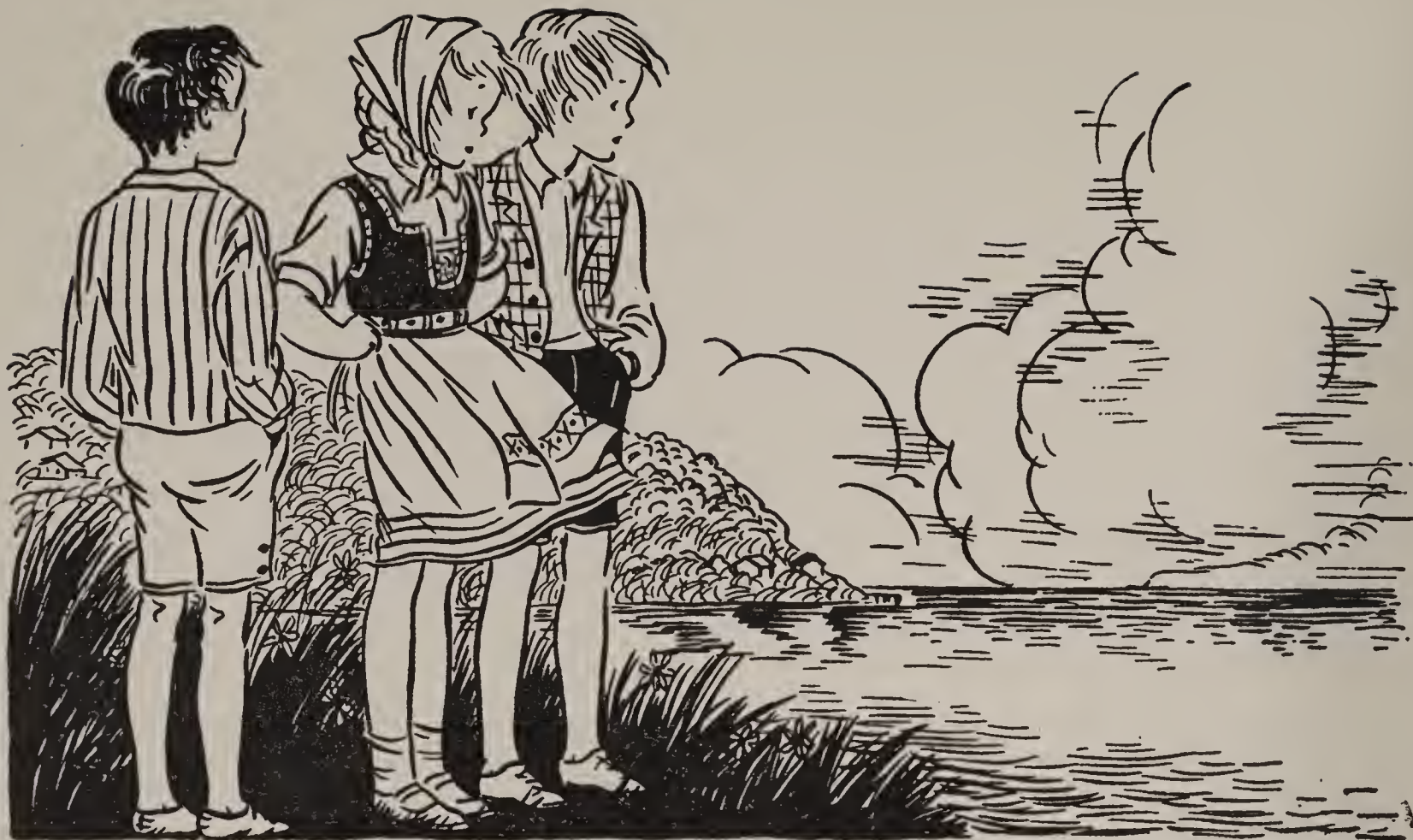
"You only say that now when it is too late," said Kari.

"Then I must pay you the five crowns for taking care of the lamb, when it was mine," said Uncle.

"Yes, thank you," answered Kari. "Then we are both pleased. I shall have the lamb, and you the fine pipe."

Uncle laughed, "When Aunt has a birthday I shall certainly give her a pipe-rack, for that is what I have always wanted, myself."

"You're joking now," answered Kari laughing with him.



XXV

LAST DAYS IN THE CITY

OH, dear! to think that you are going home just when we have become such good friends," said Lisa to little Kari.

"Yes, if I hadn't known Lisa before I knew you, then you would have been my best friend," said Metta.

There stood Kari with a little silver wire bracelet on her chubby brown arm. The boys, Peter and Marino, had clubbed together to get this bracelet for her. But all the tiny silver coins that hung from it had been given by her girl friends. Their names were engraved upon them. Metta, Lisa, Christine, and Maren. Maren was the maid in Uncle's house. Even the store-keeper had given a coin but hers was a larger one

and upon it was "Remembrance from Josephine Peterson," and that was the finest of all. When Kari went up to Veilo to say good-bye to Mrs. Dove, she asked her whether she would give a two and a half cent coin to go on the bracelet. But Mrs. Dove laughed heartily at this and kissed Kari's cheek.

"You remind so often of my own little girl, and because of that and because you are such a sweet little girl, you have grown very dear to me. And you shall have something to remember me by—your old, old friend," said Mrs. Dove. Then she laid a charming golden chain on Kari's neck. A little locket hung from it and in this was a picture of Mrs. Dove with her curls and everything. "It is an old thing," she said. "There is just one other like this and that belongs to my daughter's son who is now in England. He has his locket on his watch chain."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," said Kari, throwing her arms around Mrs. Dove's neck. "I shan't tell anyone that it is old, for it looks so fine and new—and now you needn't give me a coin with your name. I shall wear the chain always around my neck and think of you every time I open the locket."

"Dear little Kari," said Mrs. Dove stroking her hair. Then she showed Kari a photograph of her daughter's son. "He is the only one I have left," she said.

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Kari. "You have such a lot of cows, pigs, fine horses and all the other animals, and you have me—for I shall come here again you may be sure."

"How old is the boy?" asked Kari as she looked closely at the picture. "He looks so grown-up. He is surely too old to care anything about girls."

Mrs. Dove laughed. "No, he is not as old as that. I am sure that he would like you."

"I think I shall surely burst," said Kari, for wherever she went she must drink chocolate or eggnog—as a farewell. "You are all so kind and I know you all so well, I almost hate to leave you. But you must come and visit me. You don't need to come all at once."

Kari went to see Marino's grandmother, the old woman who always lay in bed. "When I stop to think I remember that Guri Runningen, the one who is nearly bent double with rheumatism, has a recipe for salve which helps everything," said Kari, "but she won't give you the recipe. That she won't do; but I am going to try to get some of the salve from Guri to send to you. When you get well after you have used it, then you must take Marino with you and come and visit me."

Marino's grandmother thanked Kari and thanked her also for all the strawberries and for the beautiful little bouquets of wild flowers.

"Well, you know I am coming here again," said Kari.

She went also to see the old Judge. "When I come back, I shall give you exercise," she told him. "Time has gone so fast for me all this vacation."

"Yes, you haven't given me much of your time. I get stouter and stouter," said the Judge. "But you might for old friendship's sake, you might let me have the lamb you got from Per Moen." He winked at her.

"No, thank you," said Kari. "I know you are only joking. You aren't any of you fit to take care of a lamb. It needs patience to tend such small creatures."

Then with Peter and Marino she visited all the hills and rocks near

the town to look at them once more. She knew where to find all the different flowers and had found the best places for wild strawberries and raspberries.

"It is just as if you had always lived here," said Peter.

Up on St. Hans' hill they stood and looked out over the sea. "Just think that I didn't like the sea at first," said Kari. "But then I was so homesick, now I hate to go away from the city."

"It is really horrid that Kari must go away," said Marino. He put his hands in his pockets and stared at the sea.

"Yes, no one should ever go away," said Peter. "Everybody should just be coming."

"When you come back, I will be sure to have a new boat," said Marino, "and we'll christen it *The Hope* and try again."

"I think that the new boat should be called *The Future*," said Peter.

"Well, you may be right in that," said Marino, looking very thoughtful. "But it all depends on what Kari would decide."

"I think it should be called *The Future's Hope* for that takes in what you both want."

"But what about you?" questioned Marino. "Isn't there a name you want for the boat?"

"I want the same as you want," said Kari, looking at the sea.

Peter and Marino looked at each other and shook their heads. "Well," sighed Peter, "we can't be standing here forever." So all three strolled down the hillside path.

"St. Hans' Hill is really one of the most beautiful hills to be found anywhere," said Marino.

But Kari suddenly remembered a great many hills and mountains, one back of another and at last the farthest and highest reached up to

the sky so light, light blue. Then her heart began to beat faster. "Oh, no!" she smiled at them. "You have never seen my mountains at home."

When they reached Uncle's house they saw Cousin Nils walking in front of the house. "Nils has come back," shouted Peter.

Then Kari dashed past him, rushed into the living room. "Where's Father?" she shouted. "Where's Father?"

"Won't you greet me, little one?" called Nils after her.

But Kari's only thought was that now that Nils was here Father must have come to take her home. Yes, here he was. Kari clung to him and there was no end to all her questions. She must know everything that had been going on at home while she had been away.

"But now you must tell me a little as to how you have been getting along."

"Oh, there will be plenty of time to talk about that when we get home," said Kari. "Think hard now, Father, has nothing new happened?"

Father bethought himself. "No—oh, yes, true, Fageros has a heifer calf. It came last Saturday."

"And could you forget to tell that?" said Kari. "Such an important thing as that? It is my calf for Mother said that if it were a heifer, it should be mine and named Karos after me. There must be much more that you don't remember since you didn't remember to tell me about the calf."

"Well, you will be soon at home and then you can see for yourself," laughed Uncle. "But it seems to me you are rather unkind, little Kari, to show us all how glad you are to wish to go away from us."

Then she turned toward him an earnest little face. "You are unkind to me to say that, for I am not as happy to leave you all as I should like to be, you know. There is so much that I haven't done yet. I have had so little time lately. I ought to have cleaned the pigeon house again before I went away, and I promised Aunt I would weed the carrot bed and I haven't had time for that. And the old Judge, I should have looked after him a little more."

"You've left so much undone here, little Kari, that I think you will have to come back very soon," Aunt said laughing.

Father turned to Kari. "Yes, what do you say? Aunt and Uncle and I have just been talking about something. How would you like to live with Uncle and Aunt and go to school here and bring your friends home with you in vacations? You know we have no such school at home."

Kari looked at him with her big eyes full of tears. "Shan't I go home now to Mother and Grandmother and Old Anna?"

"Yes, indeed," said Father. "We are going home now but later I meant."

"Oh, yes, later." And the tears in Kari's eyes disappeared. "Yes, later, I should like it, for if I don't stay with Father and Mother then I'd rather stay here."

"That was prettily said, and we shall all rejoice to have you with us again. Yes, I can hardly see how we can get along without you here," said Aunt Hanna.

"Oh, they said the same when I came from home, but everything went all right," answered little Kari.



XXVI

HOME AGAIN

THEIR train journey ended Father and Kari sat in the cariole and rode up through the valley. Kari sat in front with the lamb in her lap, for Per Moen had come with the lamb early that morning as he had promised so that Kari could take it home with her. Ola, the farm boy, sat behind Father and drove Blakken.

“You aren’t a bit changed, Ola, although I have been gone a whole eternity,” said Kari. “Both you and Blakken are exactly the same as when I went away.”

“Yes, but Kari has become a fine little city lady,” said Ola. “If you

hadn't been with your Father, I don't believe I should have known you, so fine you are with your hair a new fashion."

"Blakken knew me at once," said Kari.

"Oh, how early they are done with the hay making! There isn't a single haystack left. And how promising the potatoes look this year, Father."

The valley grew narrower and narrower as they drove farther along and Kari told Ola about other fields, about the great fields of Veilo Farm. There they used a motor plough and sowed the grain by machine. All this she told him in the midst of her questions about friends and home news. And she did not forget to talk to the lamb—"Now we shall soon be at home, my little lamb, poor thing, you are so tired from this long journey. And they wouldn't even let you stay in the car with your new mother but you had to go in the cattle car. I'm sorry for people who don't know the difference between a baby lamb and a cow."

Now they had just come to the last hill and Father and Ola walked up it by the side of the cariole.

"See!" shouted little Kari joyously. "Mother has put up the flag. Just look at the flag up there exactly the same as when I went away." For there through the birch trees she caught sight of the flag.

"Yes, they are making a great fuss over Kari's home coming," said Father.

"And Anna has been making cookies for many days," added Ola.

But Kari scarcely heard what they said. She could only gaze at the mountain side with its trees and at the beautiful flag high up there. It seemed so strange that she was almost ready to cry, feeling just as she

did when she went away from home. But that time she had cried because she felt so sad. Now she was ready to cry because she was so happy.

“Oh, Father,” she said pressing his hand. “And oh, my little lamb,” hugging the little creature. “Now we shall soon be at home all of us. Ola, can’t Blakken go a little faster, he can rest afterward.”

They came now to the last curve in the road and could see the gate and the big cherry trees and there stood Mother holding Grandmother by the arm.

“Stop!” called Kari, and almost before Ola could get Blakken to stand still, she was down on the road and springing toward Mother and Grandmother with the lamb running after her. Suddenly throwing her arms around them both she cried, “Oh, Mother! Oh, Grandmother! How delightful it is to be at home again.”

“Welcome home again, our little Kari.”

“And there is the cat! Come Kitty, you know me again surely. Is that Kranselin going behind the store-house? Why isn’t she up at the Mountain Farm? And oh, how big the new chickens have grown! Are there many roosters among them?”

Father laughed and Mother laughed.

“Do you see that Kari has a lamb with her?” asked Father.

“And the lamb is of the fine long-tailed kind, Anna,” Kari called to old Anna who stood on the steps.

“It is queer,” said Kari, “everything is just the same as when I went away from home.” She had been about the garden, the barn and the stables, the storehouse and the hay loft.

“We got in the hay without your help,” said Ola winking at her.

“Nothing is changed,” said Kari. “Not even Ola, for he is just as much of a tease as ever. Well, I have not changed either, except on the outside.” She stroked her new dress and her short hair. “Inside I am just little Kari as before.”

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